



Electoral INTEGRITY

A Kofi Annan Foundation Initiative

Final Report

Electoral Integrity in Latin America

Mexico

August 14-15, 2017

“Elections without integrity cannot provide the winners with legitimacy, the losers with security and the public with confidence in their leaders and institutions.”

— Kofi Annan



“Democracy’s
transformative
potential cannot
be grasped if
electoral processes
are fundamentally
flawed.”

— Kofi Annan

Electoral Integrity in Latin America

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I. Introduction

Between 2017 and 2018, ten countries across Latin America will hold presidential elections: Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay and Venezuela. Other countries in the region are in the process of reviewing their constitutional and electoral frameworks. Between 1978 and 2015, there have been 27 presidential transitions of power in 15 Latin American countries.

While electoral processes are the norm, across the region there are different levels of support for democracy. Surveys by Latinobarometro have shown that democracy was the preferred form of government between 1995 and 2016. The lowest level of support for it was registered in 2001 (48%) and the highest in 2010 (61%). Since 2010, support for democracy has dipped to 54%. The same survey revealed an increase in the number of people who feel indifferent to both democracy and authoritarianism: the indifference score rose from 17% in 1995 to a historic high of 23% in 2016 (Latinobarometro 2016).

On 14 - 15 August 2017, the Kofi Annan Foundation organised an international, high-level summit in Mexico City in association with the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (PARLATINO) and five Mexican partner organisations: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Electoral Institute, the Federal Electoral Court, the Specialized Electoral Attorney, and the Electoral Institute of Mexico City. The conference aims were to encourage progress towards democratic ideals, and strengthen the integrity of electoral processes.

The event brought together participants from 12 Latin American countries as well as international counterparts with experience of, and expertise in, democratic governance and Electoral Integrity. They included national,

regional, and local level representatives of executive, legislative, and judicial branches; political parties; civil society organisations; academia; and the media. Speakers included the former President of Chile, Ricardo Lagos, and the former President of Costa Rica, Laura Chinchilla, both of whom have been strong defenders of democracy.

The conference facilitated an open and free exchange of opinions, best practices and lessons learned, and focused on six main themes around the concept of Electoral Integrity:

- Gender perspectives in electoral processes.
- Money and politics.
- Election-related violence.
- Access to justice.
- The media, new technologies, and digital domains.
- Resilient institutions and political will to resist threats to Electoral Integrity.

The main objectives of the conference were to:

1. Discuss the concept of Electoral Integrity in Latin America.
2. Identify challenges that electoral processes in Latin America have faced in the past and could face in the future.
3. Identify conditions under which democratic elections failed and authoritarian practices prevailed.
4. Prioritize steps that the international community should take to (a) consolidate the capacity of national institutions to hold free and fair elections, and (b) strengthen mechanisms to prevent democratic backsliding.
5. Consolidate a network of election stakeholders able to support Electoral Integrity at the domestic, regional and international level.
6. Create a network of regional and pan-regional experts and practitioners on Electoral Integrity.
7. Generate a report with recommendations for further action.

II. Executive Summary

Below are the main conclusions reached by the six panels that met to consider the state of Electoral Integrity in Latin America, challenges to Electoral Integrity, and steps that regional and international actors can take to consolidate national capacity to hold free and fair elections.

Gender parity

Two specific and indispensable indicators of substantive equality in electoral processes are the level of democratic parity, and the incidence of political violence against women.

Electoral Integrity cannot be achieved if political violence against women is not eradicated. In order to expand the representation and participation of women – particularly indigenous women – in decision-making processes, the Electoral Integrity Initiative must identify and promote strategies for preventing violence against women.

Electoral financing

Electoral authorities are responsible for overseeing political financing. They must strengthen their rules and procedures with respect to public and private funding of elections. Consistent regulation is required. Political parties must also regulate themselves, to ensure that their funding and expenditure are transparent and legal.

To regulate campaign funding, a permanent auditing mechanism is required. Audit units should have authority to investigate electoral income and expenditure in detail, including powers to access the accounts of parties, candidates and donors. Working with national

treasuries and related authorities, an independent financial intelligence unit should provide relevant information to all stakeholders, as well as financial supervision.

To carry out these responsibilities, electoral and regulatory bodies require appropriate resources: adequate budgets and strong technical expertise.

Violence

Participants were urged to highlight the Venezuela crisis across all international platforms and advocate for peace in support of the suffering population.

International and regional organizations must work together to design effective political mechanisms for managing crises. Panellists underlined that negotiated solutions should involve social actors, such as churches and civil society organisations, not just political actors.

Access to justice

It is often assumed that the role of electoral justice is confined to resolving administrative disputes that occur during election seasons. In fact, electoral justice should be widened to include permanent tutelage and protection of political rights, protection of the public's ability to exercise political rights, and redressing violations of those rights. Electoral justice mechanisms must defend human rights.

The Inter American Court of Human Rights has affirmed that there is a direct relationship between democracy, the rule of law, and human rights. Electoral Integrity can only be understood and achieved by integrating the values and norms of all three.



The Media, new technologies, and digital security

The concentration of media ownership and absence of good reporting, as well as ‘post-truth’ cynicism and the pressures that ideologies bring to bear on freedom of expression, make it necessary to review current models of political communication.

Evidence suggests that new technologies are currently often abused to influence voting and affect electoral results. Voters are increasingly concerned about the security and anonymity of their votes.

Latin American electoral bodies should invest in technology to improve their cyber security systems, because these are vital to the integrity of votes cast electronically.

Resilient electoral institutions

Trust is the key to Electoral Integrity. The credibility of elections is undermined if voters do not believe that the authorities responsible for organising them are autonomous and independent. It is therefore vital to provide these institutions with the necessary technical capacity and financial support.

Weak democratic institutions create conditions favourable to authoritarianism. All stakeholders in elections should listen to voters and to local perceptions of Electoral Integrity.



III. Thematic Discussions

Panel 1:

A gender perspective on electoral processes

VIDEO LINK: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=46bD_T3X_wc | MIN: 2:45:28-4:11:05

This panel emphasised the importance of inclusion at every stage of the electoral process and in the conduct of states, electoral authorities, and political parties.

The panellists presented mechanisms that enhance representation, particularly for women, including parity and quota policies, and underlined that political parties can adopt democratic procedures that ensure equal participation of men and women. They also discussed the current backlash of political violence against women.

Taking full account of gender throughout the electoral process implies that arrangements are made to guarantee women's right to vote and to be elected. But this is not enough. There must be a willingness to foresee and avoid political actions that harm gender equality.

Women's political rights have been recognised formally. What is required now are institutional mechanisms that will eliminate discrimination against and exclusion of women, notably indigenous women.

Noting the progress that has been made in Bolivia and Mexico, the panellists underlined that it is vital to increase the representation and participation of indigenous women.

One can only speak of 'Electoral Integrity' when electoral processes achieve gender equality. Specifically, substantive equality implies reaching two goals: the achievement of democratic parity; and the elimination of political violence against women. Electoral Integrity cannot occur until political violence against women is eradicated.

With respect to the judiciary, achieving Electoral Integrity will require judges to adopt a gender perspective in their rulings, in accordance with international human rights and constitutional norms.

Despite reforms and advances in political representation, women still face persistent political obstacles. In particular, increasing the number of elected women does not guarantee that gender equity will progress, that women's interests will be more effectively promoted, or that women will automatically be empowered. Nor will women necessarily become more militant or more committed to an equality agenda; it cannot be assumed that politics will be much improved.

Institutional and legal steps to increase female voting and representation must therefore be accompanied by action to change cultural and social attitudes.

The panellists called on the United Nations, especially UN Women, to promote a Latin America that is truly "50-50", in which formal gender equality will be succeeded by substantive gender equality in the region's electoral processes.

Panel 2:

Money and politics – how to effectively manage political finance: Integrity and transparency

VIDEO LINK: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IgC3tXra2RI> | MIN: 4:11:05 - 6:29:59

The second panel focused on four main issues:

1. Denounce and prevent corruption in politics and during campaigns and elections.
2. Preserve the principle of political equality during political campaigns distorted by illicit funding and misuse of administrative resources, in which powerful actors exercise improper influence.
3. Prevent and combat public and private political corruption by entrenching principles that promote transparency and accountability and regulating publicity.
4. Fund and secure the sound performance and political neutrality of electoral management bodies, specialized courts, and other bodies that empower voters.

Recently, Latin American electoral campaigns have spent larger sums on influencing voters, inflating election expenditure.

Electoral authorities are responsible for overseeing political financing. They must strengthen their rules and procedures with respect to public and private funding of elections. Consistent regulation is required. Political parties must also regulate themselves, to ensure their funding and

expenditure are transparent and legal.

Some countries have formed specialized units to review the expenses of parties and candidates. To regulate campaign funding, a permanent auditing mechanism is required. Audit units should conduct in-depth investigations and have powers to access the accounts of parties, candidates, and donors. Working in tandem with national treasuries and related authorities, an independent financial intelligence unit should provide relevant information to all stakeholders in elections as well as financial supervision.

Because electronic technologies provide vital investigative and supervisory tools, which underpin efforts to establish transparency, investigation and audit units must have adequate technical capacity.

Since links between large corporations, the state, and political parties also put democracy at risk, expenditures by entrepreneurs that have a direct or indirect political influence must also be audited.

The aim should be to create a strong system of financial regulation of elections, that effectively monitor the conduct of political parties, candidates, business groups, and also government (because several Latin American states make electoral contributions).

To avoid abuses including clientelism and corruption, all electoral resources must be raised and spent in accordance with formal rules. Businesses should be prohibited from contributing to parties or candidates if they stand to benefit directly. Governments should ensure that budgeted public resources are not diverted to, or misused for, electoral purposes.

Punitive and effective sanctions should be imposed on parties and candidates that violate the rules.



Panel 3:**Prevention and control of election-related violence**

VIDEO LINK: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=46bD_T3X_wc | MIN: 6:41:09 - 7:49:03

This panel focused on democratic breakdowns that lead to violence, and strategies to prevent violence and restore peace. The participants discussed negotiation strategies that reinforce democratic practices using non-violent methods, and factors that determine success or failure. A prevention tool that maps the causes and targets of electoral and political violence was also presented.

The panel discussed the political situation in Venezuela, including electoral corruption in the country, recent violence, and tensions between the National Assembly and the new Constitutional Assembly.

Mercedes de Freitas, representing Transparency International Venezuela, entreated the audience to bring Venezuela's crisis to the attention of international forums.

Panel members found that electoral violence is usually rooted in socio-economic issues that elected representatives fail to address and over which electoral authorities have no influence or control. They stressed that elected representatives need to recognise that unfulfilled election promises fuel the electorate's growing political disillusion, as well as much political violence, and generally deter the public from engaging in electoral politics.



Electoral violence is not a technical issue: it directly threatens democracy and Electoral Integrity in some countries, and requires a response that addresses inequality and structural socio-economic problems. International and regional organisations should design a political mechanism to manage crises, and stressed the vital importance of involving social as well as political actors in efforts to negotiate solutions, including churches and civil society organisations.

Panel 4:**Access to justice**

VIDEO LINK: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lgC3Xra2RI> | MIN: 3:01 - 1:27:25

Researchers and practitioners have focused on preventing rigged elections, guaranteeing a level electoral playing field, and correcting flaws in vote tabulation. They have generally given less attention to mechanisms that uphold the rule of law and that promote and protect human rights associated with political participation and representation. Yet these are essential preconditions of Electoral Integrity. Broad public access to justice at all levels, including remedies, are essential to prevent violations of these rights.

Providing prompt and equal access to access to justice means addressing the concerns of groups that have traditionally suffered political and electoral discrimination.

Current approaches to electoral justice tend to confine its remit to the resolution of administrative disputes that arise during polling or the election period. A wider understanding of electoral justice is required.

It should include the permanent tutelage and protection of relevant political and human rights. The system must safeguard and guarantee their effective exercise, and provide prompt remedies when these are violated.

The Inter American Court of Human Rights has recognised the linear relationship between democracy, the rule of law and human rights. Electoral Integrity can only be understood and achieved by integrating the values and norms of all three.

Since elections are only one element of democracy, electoral access to justice models need to become more inclusive and also more flexible; they must meet the needs of societies as these change and enable citizens to challenge violations of their political rights.

Political process rights – to information, to free speech, to assembly and political participation, as well as due process – make transparency possible and create the conditions of Electoral Integrity. These rights should be guaranteed in all electoral processes and across all electoral and judicial institutions. The impartiality and independence of judges are equally preconditions of Electoral Integrity and access to justice, and must be no less protected.

Progress has been made with regard to gender equity and parity in Latin America. However, it has provoked new forms of gender-based political violence and exclusion. Women and minorities have been treated unequally in constitutional courts, and have faced obstacles when they have exercised their political rights and sought legal redress. Mechanisms must be established to eradicate such practices.

To act effectively, it will be necessary to analyse the degree to which Latin Americans already enjoy access to electoral justice. This can be

done using indicators that clearly identify the strengths and weaknesses of national electoral and justice systems in the region.

While continuing to address familiar problems of political corruption, there is an urgent need to define, and penalise in law, new electoral crimes, for instance political violence against women, electoral embezzlement, and usurpation of identity.

It remains vital to build institutions in the region. But this alone will not bring democratic stability and security. Given the Latin American context, citizens in the region will need to robustly exercise their political rights, including their rights to free association and expression, and governments should support the public when it does so.

According to ECLAC, Latin America is the most unequal region in the world. 175 million people in the Caribbean and Latin America live in poverty. Social and economic marginalisation generates and sustains other forms of inequality, including unequal access to political positions and influence. A society can only be truly democratic when all its members can participate in democratic processes in a fair and representative manner that respects principles of equality and non-discrimination.

Data from UN Women show that in July 2017, only 17 heads of state or government were women (8%). On average 23% of parliamentarians and judges were women. Judges can make an important contribution in the area of political rights by adopting a gender-based perspective. Until women are properly and equitably represented in our political institutions, we will not live in a true democracy or achieve development.

Panel 5:**The media, new technologies, digital domains and elections – freedom of expression or control?**

VIDEO LINK: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Igc3tXra2RI> | MIN: 1:43:15 - 3:11:35

Campaigns are now devoting substantially larger sums to advertising and online and social media outreach. However, discussion focused on the principle of free and equal access to media, recognising that a free market approach poses a double threat, by virtue of its distorting financial power and its ability to subvert the independence of information. The panellists also discussed the effectiveness of different transparency models.

Participants identified a range of illegal practices in the region. These include: hacking of campaign strategies; manipulation of social media to create false information; use of spyware to deface campaign websites; breaking into databases; hacking of smartphones; spoofing and cloning web pages; sending false mass e-mails and texts; and digital interception, attack, decryption and defence. They discussed how candidates and electors can be protected, the role of authorities, and whether elections in the region were under threat.

The modern media play an essential role in electoral processes, influencing public attitudes as well as political parties. Modern democracies cannot be imagined without the media, since they enable candidates and representatives to communicate, but also provide essential criticism, analysis and commentary.

Considering the concentration of media ownership, the quality of programming, the pressure of ideologies on freedom of expression, and ‘post-truth’ cynicism, the panel argued that we need to refresh our models of political communication. Fake information is manufactured because it promotes business; popularity and ratings matter more than the truth.

More specifically in relation to electoral process, digital media outlets have outpaced the capacity of electoral authorities to report information, and that this sometimes causes public disquiet or confusion or exacerbates controversies.

Latin American electoral bodies should invest in technology. Cyber security is essential to the integrity of electoral processes because it safeguards electronic voting systems. Rumoured or actual abuse of technology to falsify results, on the other hand, can strike a fatal blow to citizens’ confidence in the security and secrecy of their votes, undermining the legitimacy of democratic elections.

More widely, in the face of these different threats and challenges, the provision of civic education remains crucially important.



Panel 6:

Building resilient institutions and political will to resist threats to Electoral Integrity

VIDEO LINK: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Igc3tXra2RI> | MIN: 4:38:24 - 5:52:29

The sixth panel focused on major threats to Electoral Integrity and how different national and local stakeholders can collaborate to combat and prevent authoritarian practices. Participants underlined the value of broad democratic solutions and discussed successful forms of institutional resistance to democratic backsliding, and how various tools can affirm democratic principles and enforce their observance.

Scholars of Electoral Integrity rarely consider local points of view. This omission should be rectified.

More attention must also be given to the Electoral Integrity of local and municipal elections, since they frequently give rise to vote buying, clientelism, corruption, violence, and other abuses.

It is equally essential to ensure that the authorities responsible for organising national, local and municipal elections enjoy the autonomy and independence they require, and have adequate budgets and appropriate technical capacity.

Maintaining the capacity and integrity of democratic institutions is a continuous process.

There are a range of threats to the credibility and resilience of electoral and public institutions. They include: co-option of electoral management bodies by political groups; fraud, polarization within society or within electoral institutions: and collapse of public trust in judicial processes.

When democratic institutions weaken, it opens the way to authoritarianism. Political parties and actors are insufficiently sensitive to the harm they cause through corruption, populist statements, and attacks on electoral authorities.

The key to Electoral Integrity is trust. Sustaining it requires the effective involvement of all elements of the system. Attention must also be given to electoral mechanics, and to the effects of innovations that may disturb public confidence.

The resilience of electoral institutions depends on: remaining self-critical; and listening well. They need a critical voice to adapt to new challenges, demands, and expectations. While institutional learning depends on listening carefully to what citizens think and want.

CLOSING SESSION

VIDEO LINK: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Igc3tXra2RI> | MIN: 6:06:15 - 6:39:38

See the closing remarks of Alan Doss and the closing address of Laura Chinchilla Miranda (in Annex 2).

IV. Acknowledgements

We wish to acknowledge and thank all the remarkable individuals and organisations who played a role in making this conference a success, whether as keynote speakers, moderators, participants or donors.

Our thanks go especially to our partners organisations, the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (PARLATINO, and in Mexico: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Electoral Institute, the Federal Electoral Court, the Specialized Electoral Attorney, and the Electoral Institute of Mexico City.

Former Presidents Ricardo Lagos and Laura Chinchilla merit our particular appreciation for delivering keynote addresses and sharing their experience and insights into Latin America’s democratic progress.

We extend a special thanks to Carmen Alanis, whose stewardship and organisation of the conference were central to its success, and who drafted this report.

The Foundation would also like to acknowledge the supportive role played by the members of the Electoral Integrity Initiative, and in particular those who sent participants to this conference, namely OSF, NDI, the Carter Centre, International IDEA, and IFES.

Finally, we must express our appreciation to the government of Norway, the Mo Ibrahim Foundation and Macro Advisory Partners for their generous support.



“Legitimacy is important to ensure that the outcomes of elections are respected and that they are accepted.”

— Alan Doss



V. ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: Programme

August 14

Opening ceremony

Luis Videgaray Caso

Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mexico

Alan Doss

Executive Director of the Kofi Annan Foundation

Monica Arali Soto Fregoso

Justice of the Federal Electoral Court of Mexico

Santiago Nieto

Specialized Electoral Attorney of Mexico

Blanca Alcala

Alternate President of PARLATINO

Mario Velazquez

President of the Electoral Institute of Mexico City

Lorenzo Cordova

President of the National Electoral Institute of Mexico

Electoral Integrity in Latin America

Keynote speakers

Kofi Annan

Ricardo Lagos

Former President of Chile

Moderator: Miguel Ruiz Cabañas

Under Secretary of Multilateral Issues and Human Rights

Foreign Affairs Ministry of Mexico

First working panel

A gender perspective on electoral processes

Laura Chinchilla

Former President of Costa Rica

Monica Arali Soto Fregoso

Justice of the Electoral Court of Mexico

Ana Guezmes

UN Women Representative to Mexico

Katia Veronica Uriona Gamarra

President of the Superior Electoral Tribunal of Bolivia

Flavia Freidenberg

UNAM / Legal Research Institute

Moderator: David Holiday

Senior Regional Advocacy Officer in the Latin America

Program / Open Society Foundations

Second working panel

Money and politics – how to effectively manage political finance

Juan Pablo Pozo

President of the National Electoral Council of Ecuador

Gilmar Ferreira Mendes

President of the Superior Electoral Tribunal of Brazil

Ivan Velasquez Gomez (Commissioner)

*International Commission Against Impurity
in Guatemala (CICIG)*

Maria Marvan Laborde

President of the Governing Council / Transparency Mexico

Daniel Zovatto

*International IDEA, Director for Latin America
and the Caribbean*

Moderator: Michael Svetlik

*Vice President of Programs /
International Foundation for
Electoral Systems (IFES)*



Third working panel

Prevention and control of election-related violence

Eugenio Chicas

Former President of the Electoral Tribunal of El Salvador

Alejandra Barrios

President of the Global Network of Domestic Election Monitors (GNDEM)

Mercedes de Freitas

Executive Director of Transparency International, Venezuela

Edmundo Jacobo Molina

Executive Secretary of the National Electoral Institute of Mexico (INE)

Moderator: Hiroko Miyamrua

Co-Team Leader. Country Support. Electoral Assistance Division Department (UN-EAD)

August 15

Fourth working panel

Access to justice

Eduardo Ferrer Mac-Gregor Poisot

Vice President of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights

Jaime Bestard Duschek

President of the Superior Tribunal of Electoral Justice of Paraguay

Rolando Gonzalez Ulloa

Secretary General of PARLATINO (Costa Rica)

Santiago Nieto

Specialized Electoral Attorney of Mexico

Moderator: Carmen Alanis

Kofi Annan Foundation



Fifth working panel

Media, democracy and elections

Leonardo Curzio

Internationalist and Mexican Journalist

Blanca Alcalá

Alternate President of PARLATINO (Mexico)

Eduardo Nuñez

Director of Central America Public Security Program (NDI / Guatemala)

Jennie K. Lincoln

Director of the Latin America and the Caribbean Program of the Carter Center

Nguyen Huu Dong

International Electoral Expert

Moderator: Manuel Carrillo Poblano

Head of the International Affairs Unit / National Electoral Institute of Mexico

Sixth working panel

Building resilient institutions and political will
against threats to Electoral Integrity

Janine Otalora

President of the Electoral Court of Mexico

Yuri Beltran

Counselor of the Electoral Institute of Mexico City

Alan Doss

Executive Director of the Kofi Annan Foundation

Lorenzo Cordova

President of the National Electoral Institute of Mexico

Moderator: Eduardo Nuñez

*Director of Central America Public Security Program
(NDI / Guatemala)*

Conclusions and closing session

Alan Doss

Executive Director of the Kofi Annan Foundation

Laura Chinchilla

Former President of Costa Rica

Miguel Ruiz Cabañas

*Under Secretary of Multilateral Issues and Human Rights,
Foreign Affairs Ministry of Mexico*

“Democracy is
the best system
for limiting the
exercise of
power to the
benefit of
citizens.”

— Ricardo Lagos

ANNEX 2: Speeches

Opening session

Message from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mexico, Dr. Luis Videgaray Caso

It is a pleasure to welcome you all to the Mexican Foreign Ministry. I would like first of all to applaud all the effort and initiative of the Kofi Annan Foundation, to greet Dr Alan Doss, and, especially, the distinguished Mexican Juris Doctor, Maricarmen Alanís, who with her leadership, has made possible this meeting on Electoral Integrity in our region.

I greet the electoral authorities who greatly distinguish with their presence this event. First, the President of the National Electoral Institute, Dr Lorenzo Cordoba; Judge Monica Soto, member of the Electoral Court of Mexico, thank you Justice for being here; Dr Santiago Nieto, Head of the FEPADE; and Dr Mario Velázquez, President of the Electoral Institute of Mexico City. I greet the just designated Ambassador of Mexico to Colombia, Blanca Alcalá, Senator, who today has one of her last events as the Alternate President of the Parlatino; and I also take this opportunity to thank the Parlatino for its participation in this event.

In a very special way, I would like to acknowledge and thank the presence at the Foreign Ministry of Mexico, of both former Presidents Ricardo Lagos of Chile and Laura Chinchilla of Costa Rica, two close friends of Mexico whom we greatly admire and recognize. Thank you for being at this seminar, thank you for being in Mexico again, Mexico is always your home.

I am grateful for the presence of representatives of the diplomatic corps

accredited in Mexico and representatives of international organizations, thank you very much for being here. I greet my colleagues in the Foreign Ministry, Ambassador Ruiz Cabañas, Ambassador Flores, and all those who have participated in the organisation of this event and of course the representatives of the media.

This event, organised to discuss Electoral Integrity during these two days, comes at a timely moment. It is a subject of great relevance for our continent and particularly for Mexico. Mexico, in a very short time (seen in a historical context), has built a real and effective democracy. The democratic transition in Mexico (as we can discuss) had its focal point in the year 1997 or perhaps 2000, with the presidential alternancy. But certainly in a historical perspective it is a recent and extraordinary event to have achieved a peaceful transition to an electoral democracy of freedoms and, above all, to have created independent and effective institutions.

If one thing explains why the democratic transition that occurred in Mexico was possible, it was the creation of strong, autonomous and credible electoral institutions, that are the backbone of Electoral Integrity today.

Today we talk a lot about our deficiencies, the defects, the vulnerabilities of our electoral system. But we cannot lose sight of the fact, because it would be an injustice to the history of Mexico and especially to those who made this transformation possible, that Mexico today is a full electoral democracy, and this is due to the autonomous institutions that were created just a couple of decades ago and have been strengthened further in the last few years.

The creation of an autonomous citizen institute, responsible for organising

elections, removing that responsibility from the Executive Branch, was perhaps the decisive step that led to the transition to a full democracy in Mexico.

To have not only a body to organise elections, but an Electoral Court, also autonomous, taking decisions that are legitimate and fully credible, has been fundamental in each of the electoral processes that we have seen – not only the presidential elections, but also elections in the states and for the legislature.

Therefore, in Mexico, if something must be done to protect Electoral Integrity, the first fundamental element is to strengthen and recognise our electoral bodies, the National Electoral Institute, the Electoral Court, and the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Electoral Offences of the Attorney General's Office. And of course now, as of the recent electoral reform, the state organs that today act in concurrence with the Federal electoral body.

Undoubtedly, our electoral democracy has many flaws, which, as we have said, cannot be ignored. The use of illicit money in campaigns, illegal publicity, and other inequities, must be addressed in a timely manner. Where there are anticipated campaign events, in short, there are always important challenges. But we must start from the base: we Mexicans are today an electoral democracy. What we are protecting is something that was not built overnight and that must be protected.

This is the great challenge that we will face in 2018, and to face this challenge we have a very powerful instrument, an instrument to which Mexico must accede with conviction and with joy, which is international scrutiny, scrutiny of the



organisation of the electoral process, of the actions of the courts, and in general of the conduct of the process itself.

That is why this event is important in Mexico, and why in Mexico we open our arms to all institutions with experience, prestige, credibility, that want to come to Mexico to observe us, to point out our defects, help us to become better, warn us of risks. Because Mexico is a country that believes in international scrutiny as a powerful instrument of change, improvement and defence of democratic values.

In this sense, Mexico also believes that we cannot study only what happens in our country. This is why it is pertinent to develop a Latin American dialogue and discuss Electoral Integrity as a fundamental value to be protected and encouraged in our region. There is much that we can learn from each other, there is much that we can learn from successful experiences, and also from problematic cases in countries facing different circumstances which are not identical to our but, yes, are comparable.

Of course, and this I want to stress, Latin American countries must also raise their voices in all spaces when democracy in Latin America is threatened.

America is a continent that decided to be democratic, particularly on September 11, 2001 in Lima, when the Organization of American States signed the Democratic Charter in a continent with a very serious history of authoritarian governments that rose to power by force. The continent decided to be democratic and we made a collective commitment to defend democracy as the only form of government admissible in our continent: electoral democracy, equitable, with full respect for the division of powers.

That is why the international community, as we affirmed in the city of Lima last August 8, sees with great concern what is happening in a sister nation on our continent, Venezuela. The region cannot remain silent when

a government decides to cancel elections because the polls do not favour it, when a government chooses to imprison politicians who question it, when a government decides to abolish a National Assembly simply because the opposition has a majority. What is happening in Venezuela now, with the election of a Constituent Assembly whose origin and nature we do not recognize, which has assumed powers superior to powers of democratically constituted institutions, is a serious regression from the process of democratisation in the region.

And therefore, events like this one must deal with this case and any other that threatens the extraordinary system of government – profoundly powerful, but also very vulnerable – that is democracy. We say this from Mexico not because our democracy is perfect, but because we believe, as I said a moment ago, that we live in a moment when we should open ourselves to international scrutiny, in order to recognise our problems and from there correct them and become better.

But that also implies a responsibility, to point out what happens in other nations, particularly when we see cases, like this one, which are extreme, regrettable and very painful, when we witness attacks against a form of government that in Churchill's famous phrase, **“is the worst, except for all the others”** but remains the *only* form of government that can bring us harmony and peaceful coexistence, and above all address the enormous challenges that, as countries and as a region, we face today.

I again celebrate this seminar. I thank the organizers, and believe it is a great honour for the Mexican Foreign Ministry that we have been chosen to host this space for reflection. We need many discussions like these, we need to talk a lot about democracy and about the identity of democracy, but above all, we must do much to protect it, to defend it and make it more effective.

VIDEO LINK: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=46bD_T3X_wc | MIN: 49:20-1:01:29

On Electoral Integrity

Video address by Mr. Kofi A Annan

On behalf of the Kofi Annan Foundation and our partners, let me welcome you to this conference on Electoral Integrity in Latin America.

I regret that prior commitments prevent me from participating in discussions which are at the heart of my Foundation's Electoral Integrity Initiative.

I am confident that the technical expertise, senior political experience and local and international knowledge represented at this conference can help reinvigorate regional and local efforts to deepen democracy and improve Electoral Integrity.

Like you, I believe that democracy is the political system best suited to manage our changing world, and that it is the foundation of social and economic progress – locally and globally.

However, we must acknowledge and address its imperfections along with the challenges and dangers to democratic ideals and institutions that are in evidence around the world, including in Latin America.

Politicians and institutions of governance are struggling everywhere to keep up with the impact of globalization and regional integration.

They find themselves less able to manage the forces that affect people's lives.

When citizen's expectations are disappointed, trust in democratically-elected officials deteriorates.

Ladies and gentleman, over the next 18 months, there will be presidential elections in Ecuador, Chile, Honduras, Costa Rica, Paraguay, Colombia, Mexico, Brazil and Venezuela.

We should welcome such elections as an integral part of democratic practice. Transparent and fair elections are vital to the effective functioning of democracy.

Of course, democracy is more than elections, as I am sure you all agree.

Nevertheless, democracy's transformative potential cannot be grasped if electoral processes are fundamentally flawed.

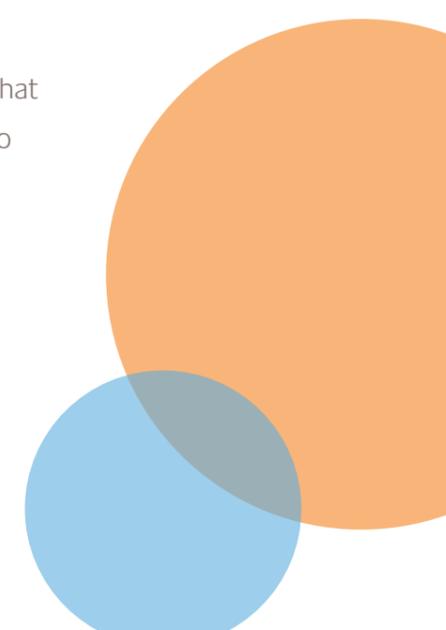
When they are flawed, or crassly manipulated, citizens are denied the right to have a voice in how they are governed, and the opportunity to hold their leaders to account.

Elections cannot then deliver their main benefit: the peaceful transfer of political power.

This is not just about legality – it is about legitimacy, a legitimacy that allows the winners to govern credibly and peacefully and which also protects those who lose.

Democracy may seem to be in disarray but citizen's aspirations for democratic governance remain high.

Our challenge is to realize those aspirations, increase public confidence in elections, and protect democratic space so that political contenders do not turn to extreme alternatives to secure power.



As with every region in the world, some countries in Latin America have held – or not held – elections that have led to protracted social upheaval and violence.

Fortunately, in other countries, democratic norms and improved electoral management, have been consolidated and entrenched in policy and practice.

New ideas and technologies and a growing reservoir of best practices from within and outside the region provide a wealth of experience on which we can draw to further strengthen Electoral Integrity.

The next two days provide an opportunity for you to take stock of contrasting electoral trends in the region and beyond, and to distil some lessons from those trends.

I urge you to be frank and bold in identifying challenges to Electoral Integrity and identifying solutions that can be used at the national level.

Your findings will also inform and frame the activities of the Electoral Integrity Initiative in other parts of the world, and contribute to the global debate on the role of elections and their impact on democracy today.

Let me therefore convey my warm appreciation to the Mexican government and to our other partners, especially Carmen Alanis, for their great support in organizing this event.

I want to thank also all the participants and wish you a successful and stimulating conference.

VIDEO LINK: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=46bD_T3X_wc | MIN 1:13:37-1:01:54

The concept of Electoral Integrity and an assessment of the region

By Ricardo Lagos, Former President of Chile
(Speech originally delivered in Spanish)

In the first place, I would like to applaud this initiative and congratulate those who have already said some of the words we need to say.

The introduction has been very complete, and I can only rejoice to hear the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, who I think has touched all the relevant topics with extraordinary clarity. What Luis Videgaray said is that, when we face this kind of serious situation, we as Latin Americans should be capable of speaking with a united voice, so that we can make progress towards Electoral Integrity in our region; but we must also take responsibility when we face difficulties. We are the ones who can help each other to solve problems.

Just as we supported our sister country Colombia through the long peace process led by President Santos, we should be capable of developing a common project to help our Venezuelan friends.

I think that this seminar, and what has been done and said in the opening ceremony, reinforces my conviction that democracy is a permanent process of deepening.

Democracy is an everyday assignment for each one of us, and we all have to keep our eyes on the horizon. But we also all know that it is hard to reach this horizon, because when we think we are about to arrive, the

horizon moves forward. This is what democracy is: we want to perfect it and we see it there on the horizon, but we do not realize that, while we are trying to reach it, we are changing the everyday reality of our country.

And maybe because we politicians are a bit conservative, we do not change the agenda with the speed required to adapt us to the new conditions that are created every day by a deepening democracy that is always transformative.

But we also can say that democracy has another quality that cannot be acquired any other way. Democracy is a way to acquire power. And once power has been obtained a way to exercise it. And we need to understand that power legitimates itself, day to day, by how we practice it.

As a consequence, we have autocratic deviations that delegitimise power that was originally acquired legitimately. This is a key issue. Let us say that democracy is the tool par excellence of citizens for limiting the use of power by the powerful.

So, democracy is a cluster of elements: we acquire power, we exercise it, and as we practise it, we legitimise or delegitimize it.

But, at the same time, democracy is the best system for limiting the exercise of power to the benefit of citizens. This is the essence of a democratic system. And that is why democracy and the distribution of power are at the heart of what we have to address.

The context we are living in is difficult and complex. Never before in the history of humanity have there been so many countries that practise – or claim to practise – democracy. Let's say it clearly: no country can pretend to walk into the international arena without claiming a democratic system. That is today's reality.

And here I join those who have reminded us that 80% of Latin Americans in this region will participate in an election in the coming twelve months.

This is why I think is very important to be here. Our objective is to perfect our systems and put ourselves in a position to listen to the voice of that 80% and hear what they want for our societies here in Latin America.

As Kofi Annan pointed out in his opening statement, how can we hear the voices of our citizens? I think this point is crucial because it is a major concern of our societies. How do we hear what citizens want for their society, and how do then allow them to choose between different options?

I would like to recall an Italian political philosopher, Norberto Bobbio. In a beautiful quote, he says: **“in every society, we all have to be at least equal in something”**. He also says that this is the minimum civil standard in a society, and that citizens are the ones who define this minimum civil standard by voting.

The 80% will say **“I want *this* at least”**. It follows that, to understand the importance of an electoral system, we must first understand the importance of respecting each citizen who expresses himself or herself, and that all citizens together, summed, will define the type of society we live in. Citizens who want to be **“equal in something”**. This I think it is the central point: when we talk of Electoral Integrity, what we are doing is reclaiming Bobbio: **“Listen to the citizen, so that the country and society will be equal in something”**.

And **“equal in something”** means the public goods that citizens are demanding. Yes I know, I read the newspaper too, my country is growing and this is understood by the public. This I think leads us to the deepest answer to the challenge of Electoral Integrity. It is true that we will elect a woman or a man to the position of president, parliamentarian, governor,

counsellor, etc. But behind that name, there is a sum of ideas and those ideas are the ones that mobilize us to vote for that man or woman. And this is where we must ensure that the process is both appropriate and has integrity.

I would like to point that, when the Global Commission discussed Electoral Integrity and published its strategy for enhancing Electoral Integrity in its final report in 2012, the title of its report was “deepening democracy”. By definition, that strategy for Electoral Integrity has not reached a conclusion. We will always discover that things change and our concept of Electoral Integrity has already evolved with the emergence of new technologies, the internet, and social media.

Our democracy is representative. But how much is it participatory? Our concept of participation has changed too as a result of new technologies. If this meeting had been called twenty or twenty-five years ago, it would not have including topics on participation and new technologies because those technologies did not exist.

More than once I have said that democracy exists because Gutenberg, more than five hundred years ago, invented the printing press. But at that time, everything was slower, a hundred years went by until someone had the idea of using the printing press to start a newspaper. So the Gazette appeared in France in 1630, and the printing press at the end of the fifteenth century. When newspapers appeared, we discovered what debates went on between the court and the king. And French philosophers such as Rousseau, Voltaire or Montesquieu could say: **“If we all know what problems the king is solving, why don’t we solve them ourselves?”**

That is how democracy surged up as an idea in society, starting with the printing press. And what will democracy look like in light of new

technologies? I would like to know the answer to that, because I think we are just starting out.

However, I want to focus on **“elections with integrity”** as mentioned in the 2012 report. It is obviously, a concept based on the democratic principles of universal suffrage, political equality and professional organization of elections. The final report identified five crucial elements of Electoral Integrity.

1. ***The rule of law.***
2. ***Suitable electoral bodies.*** Skilled, professional, transparent, independent and autonomous.
3. ***The vital importance of institutions and norms,*** operating under the rule of law. Rules for when candidates present themselves, voting dates, election requirements, etc. In other words, it is essential to guarantee that everyone has the possibility to express himself or herself; and to provide an electoral system in which the winner does not take all. This is interesting: it means we pick a president but also a Congress that will monitor his or her actions and establish a balance. The winner does not win everything, not least because the loser can be sure that in the next election he or she might win. How can we establish procedures and neutral institutions that guarantee this outcome?
4. ***Elimination of barriers to equality.*** Here we address such topics as gender equality, and the differences of interest of the different economic powers that coexist in a society, of who has more access, and who has less.
5. ***Legitimacy.*** I want to talk in particular about the last of these elements: legitimacy.



Legitimacy and citizens' votes

I consider the issue of legitimacy to be extremely relevant. It is a topic not usually discussed in relation to levels of citizen participation and the right to vote. Is the vote a right or is it a duty? If it is a right, very well, I will exercise it whenever I want. If it is a duty, we are obliged to vote. This debate has not been resolved, and it is central to a democracy.

In the past, some people used to speak about social class and said that social classes express themselves by voting. However, all the empirical studies, at least those I know, conclude that when voting is voluntary the groups that express themselves most fully are usually those with higher incomes (rather than those less well off).

If voting is mandatory, the state has the right to tell its citizens to give five minutes of their time to declare what is best for their country. Should voting be mandatory or voluntary? The implications are profound, but this issue is not debated in the election. Have you noticed this?

Let's now discuss 'legitimacy', because in each of our countries we have many options to ensure legitimacy.

Legitimacy of institutions and electoral results

How can we improve the different mechanisms that we have, to create professional and competent institutions?

We have been moving forward and we have done a lot. But we still have a lot to do. After all, if our institutions are really legitimate, our election results will be credible.

Legitimacy and electoral systems

How can we evaluate different electoral systems in relation to the winner-takes-all problem? Determining the best electoral system (plurality

systems, simple majority systems, proportional representation, etc.) requires serious reflection.

In Chile, we inherited a system from the dictatorship that was called 'binominal', where two candidates were picked per district; two senators in every zone, two deputies per district. The only way to introduce a complete majority was if the total number of votes received by the winning block – or list – of candidates was more than double the amount of votes received by the bloc in second place. In this case, both elected candidates were drawn from the first bloc. In all other cases, one candidate from different blocs was elected.

Legitimacy and representation: gender quotas & minorities

How can we eliminate barriers to equity and secure real participation of all citizens? This is where quota laws matter, and I want to say that there are important differences between the different quota laws available.

Do I want a quota of 40% of parliament candidates to be women (as in Chile, which introduced a 40% quota for women by party for deputies and senators)?

What does that mean? At this moment, political parties are working out how to fulfil this requirement because "the vast majority of party members are men". They are looking for women who will not be a "threat" to anyone. I'm being absolutely plain. I want to be reassured that the percentage of women in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate will increase. However I am afraid this kind of law is not enough. For example, some parties also have internal bylaws whose rules and practices will have to be adapted.

This brings me to a related issue that concerns all our Latin American countries: what happens with minorities? What happens with native people in our countries? What are their levels of participation and representation?

Here too, an interesting issue arises. Are we going to have a single electoral registry? Is it possible or more appropriate to have an electoral registry differentiated by ethnic origin? Will all systems recognize minority ethnicities' traditional methods of electing or designating their authorities and representatives to parliament?

In an interesting case, New Zealand established an electoral registry for the Maori population which was going to pick 10 of Parliament's 100 members. This really implies equality, equality of opportunities.

Can we establish a separate electoral registry or must we have a unified electoral registry? These topics are going to have to be part of the debate about Electoral Integrity in Latin America. They should be debated in all multinational and multicultural states.

Of course, we are a multicultural region. In all our countries there are different cultures derived from migration. As Carlos Fuentes used to say: **"In Latin America, we are all immigrants"**. Some arrived between 20,000-30,000 years, via the Bering Strait, others say that they came from the south. Later, some people came from the Iberian Peninsula. How can we integrate these different streams in our electoral systems?

This too is an important topic. We need to debate many new elements that are essential to Electoral Integrity.

Legitimacy: representative vs. participatory democracy

Earlier I contrasted representative democracy with participatory democracy. And here we have to be very careful with demagogues, who will surely present us with questions of the form:

"Do you agree with decision "X" of the government?"

If you do agree, mark 1.

If you do not agree, mark 2.

If you do not want to say anything, mark 3."

This that cause endless referendums – more polls than our Swedish friends who even call referendums for cheeses... What kind of cheeses do you want to eat?

Having said this, this is still a crucial topic: democracy must be representative.

The key is that you *have* to give attention to certain issues because if you do not there will be difficulties.

This will be essential issue for electoral legitimacy in the future. How much participation? How much representation?

Legitimacy and dissatisfaction

I cannot conclude my analysis of legitimacy without referring to the clear statement in Mr. Kofi Annan's address, where he talked about "dissatisfaction". Annoyance or indignation is taking everyone out of politics, considered an activity without prestige. The feeling that "I don't care who they choose" is spreading in developed countries in our region.

I think there are profound reasons for this. In part, it is because communications today are instant; under the influence of new technologies and globalization, many feel that the American dream has come to an end.

I want to share some facts with you. Of those born before 1940, 90% think that their sons will do better than they have. For those born between 1950 and 1970, the proportion that thinks their sons will do worse goes up. And when you reach people born in 1980, half of them think their sons



are going to do worse. It is brutal. These facts perfectly explain what happened in the United States at the last elections, what is happening in France, and how Macron unpredictably won the election although he was outside the political system. Not to mention our English friends with Brexit and the situation they are in.

Let us therefore be careful in Latin America. We used to know how to handle our economy, and we knew how to handle our expenditure. Concretely, because commodity prices rose, we were able to sharply reduce poverty levels. The millions of Latin Americans that left poverty behind feel that they stood up – did this by their efforts.

There are protests because the American dream is declining, because people see that their demands are growing. This is what Kofi Annan was telling us. **“How do we listen to this demand and how do we solve it?”** Democracy must be the system that delivers the conditions that enable us to meet the demands of our citizens.

At this Conference, clearly, we will push for Electoral Integrity in Latin America, quickly.

But let us acknowledge that the answer to this feeling of discomfort that we have will probably require shared thinking that we have to do here in Latin America: recipes from the North or from developed countries won't solve the problems that we are facing today in the region.

I believe that the measure of the legitimacy of our system will be how those who are elected answer the demands of those who elected them.

Thank you.

VIDEO LINK: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=46bD_T3X_wc | MIN: 1:13:51-2:03:29

“While building and sustaining democracies is a long and complex task, their dismantling can happen quickly.”

— Laura Chinchilla

Closing remarks

By Alan Doss, President of the Kofi Annan Foundation

To our Electoral Integrity partners who are all here, in particular colleagues from the Carter Center, NDI, OSF, IFES and International IDEA, thank you very much indeed. This is not only a Kofi Annan Foundation meeting, far from it, it is a collective effort and I really want to acknowledge your support, and also the support of those who have come from the United Nations and other bodies for this event; and of course the members of the media here today.

As we have stated several times in the past two days, at least ten major elections will take place over the next eighteen months in this region, which of course is why this Electoral Integrity conference was both very timely and opportune. I am delighted that we were able to participate and to give support for that.

I think one of the mayor lessons we've talked about and learned during the last couple of days is that legality per se is important but it is not enough. I repeat it again: legitimacy is important to ensure that the outcomes of elections are respected, that they are accepted, which entirely make it possible to ensure truly democratic practice and governance.

The panels that worked on the six issues we have discussed looked at the different elements of what makes up integrity. They explored them from different angles, and I know the President will shortly give us a summary conclusion of the different perspectives that were presented. I will be happy to leave this hard work to her.

Several people came up to me and asked: "What's the next step?" Well the most immediate one is that we will produce a report on the conference which we will circulate. I am assuming it is going to be in English as well as Spanish, and of course we will do it electronically so that everybody can access it.

The second question asked was: "How do we continue this process?" As I said earlier, the Kofi Annan Foundation is not looking for business. But I hope you will all take these discussions with you, and work with all those partner organizations that I just mentioned here of course in Mexico but also across the region. Many have representative offices in the countries of interest to us. Work with them, develop ideas to push forward some of the things that we have talked about here. It would be very good to hear that discussions are taking place in countries where elections are coming up. Let us seek a multiplier effect, a broader impact, to spread what we have spent the last two days discussing.

I hope this discussion will continue throughout the region and beyond. In two weeks, we will do a similar event in Southeast Asia. I have learned a lot from this, and if we could transport this to Kuala Lumpur, it would be great. But anyway, many thanks again for all your support and all your help. I will give the floor to President Chinchilla.

VIDEO LINK: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lgC3tXra2RI> | MIN: 6:06:47- 6:12:02



Conclusions and closing address

By **Laura Chinchilla Miranda,**
Former President of Costa Rica

Dear friends,

I want to begin this closing speech by thanking the hosts, panellists, organizations and other participants who accompanied us during these two days of intense and fruitful reflection, for their valuable contributions in the various topics we discussed. In particular, I would like to thank the Kofi Annan Foundation for its successful and timely convocation, the PARLATINO for its support and active participation, the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs for having opened the doors of their home with great warmth, and the electoral institutions of Mexico whose Chairs enthusiastically supported the activity and gave us exceptional contributions.

What are the main conclusions of the last two days of discussion and analysis?

In the first place, we have the satisfaction of having celebrated an event of high international standing, in which we had the participation of notable decision makers and academics to discuss a transcendental issue: Electoral Integrity.

As introduced by former Secretary Kofi Annan, “with at least 10 major elections in the next 18 months, Latin America is at a crossroads” – a crossroads that, as

described by the INE President, is characterized, among other things, by “authoritarian drives and the autocratic exercise of power, that are still present and expressed in the simulation of institutional changes that favor the manipulation of the will issued at the polls.”

The relevance of the topic of quality of democracy in our region was widely recognized by the authorities that participated in the opening ceremony. In this regard, Foreign Minister Luis Videgaray strongly believes that it is necessary to “raise the voice” in defense of democracy, particularly when “in other parts of the continent, it is being threatened or not respected.”

The value of exchanging experiences to strengthen and improve electoral standards was also emphasized. In this regard, Justice of the Electoral Court of Mexico, Monica Arali Soto, acknowledged that **“The comparative exercise of good practices is a mandatory benchmark for the functioning of solid democratic institutions...”**

We leave with a sense of urgency about the threats that hang over our democracies and the measures we must implement – and continue to implement – to reduce or eliminate the impact of those threats.

On the one hand, we have identified structural threats to Electoral Integrity: economic crises, the fragile democratic culture of our societies, and corruption, among others. As we all know, these are complex and multi-causal problems, and we do not have a single recipe to solve them. However, we have insisted here – and will continue to insist – on the importance of placing the Electoral Integrity Initiative on international and national agendas that address these structural problems.



In terms of economic and fiscal crises, we must continue to advocate for not cutting back the budgets of our institutions of electoral organization and control. We cannot put a price on our democracies that fluctuates with the swing of financial crises. Electoral Integrity is not an item of inventory that we can enjoy in times of public boom, and abandon in times of crisis. Quite the opposite. It is precisely in times of crisis that our electoral institutions must be ready to respond to any political or social conflict that may arise. Channelling social crises through democratic institutions is a sign of their strength and consolidation.

This leads me to mention another structural threat: the fragile democratic culture of our societies. Not only must we model entire electoral systems, we must model electoral systems whose integrity persists over time. As has been said here, and in other international forums repeatedly: democracy is not limited to the day of the elections, nor to the following week. It is first and foremost a daily exercise. And achieving that state of democratic consolidation will not be possible if we do not strengthen the political culture of our peoples and the quality of leadership. This, without a doubt, is the most complex and necessary task that we have ahead, which in turn supposes the necessary condition that, as former President Lagos reminded us with great vision and common sense: “Listen to citizens”.

When we speak of ‘democratic culture’ we all resonate with a notion that is important but also vague. Therefore, the need to organize events like this, which helps us to ‘unpack’ this notion, and give it concrete value and goals. If I may, here at the end of this event I want to share a new and very specific idea I have about democratic culture: a nation with a democratic culture is one where democracy works “in the good and in the bad”; where in times of political turmoil its leaders and citizens prefer their institutions and the rule of law to authoritarianism and violence.

Democratic culture, then, is not only a collective exercise of democratic action and participation, but also an exercise in collective resistance to populist temptation and authoritarianism.

As has become clear in the discussions we have had, while building and sustaining democracies is a long and complex task, their dismantling can happen quickly. If there is anything that can prevent the acceleration of undemocratic processes, it is, precisely, Electoral Integrity.

The other structural problem we discussed was corruption. In this regard, the role of Electoral Integrity plays out in two ways: on the one hand, its very existence depends on low levels of corruption; on the other, the consolidation of Electoral Integrity helps to prevent corruption from increasing and penetrating society’s institutional fabric. In other words, the more an electoral system has integrity, the less corrupt the whole system will be. In the same way, the more the electoral system has integrity, the more voters will have confidence in the democratic system.

In that sense, it is worth rescuing the words of FEPADE’s head, Santiago Nieto, who said **“corruption begins with electoral crimes.”** I am convinced that for every act of corruption that we managed to avoid with effective electoral regulations, we recovered hundreds, if not thousands, of citizens who support democracy as the main form of government. On the contrary, a single act of corruption can cause serious damage to citizens’ confidence.

That is the direct relationship between Electoral Integrity and the strengthening of a democratic culture: integrity serves to build, maintain, and restore citizens’ confidence in democracy. In that line of action, the different panels also discussed more concrete indispensable policies, such as



the independence of the institutions of electoral organization and control (both judicial and administrative) and access to them; the strengthening of guarantees of freedom of expression and the press; political financing; gender parity in political parties and government positions; and the inclusion of minority groups in the democratic process. All of these policies will help us mitigate the impact of structural threats to our democracies.

In the case of the independence of electoral institutions, and their control and access to them, the panel insisted that our electoral courts, judges, and prosecutors have the necessary legal protection to carry out their work in an autonomous and technical manner. This institutional theme is also intrinsically related to the issue of political financing. The requirement is that, where individuals and companies are allowed to finance electoral campaigns, they must do so under strict legality and transparency controls, for which the Money and Policy panel recommended stronger control units, legislation based on self-regulation, and the use of technological tools in control processes. Again, if maintaining and restoring trust between public bodies and voters is the main objective, it is absolutely essential to ensure the integrity of funds that finance electoral processes. However, the independence and integrity of institutions is not only guaranteed by laws and regulations, but also by a free and responsible press that consistently controls the actions of public officials, and promotes transparency and adherence to the law in the conduct of those officials. Unfortunately, it is in the matter of freedom of expression that the world and also our region have experienced the greatest deterioration. According to Freedom House indexes, today only five countries in Latin America enjoy full freedom of expression and the press. As indicated in the panel on Media, Democracy and Elections, this deterioration has contributed to political pressures, and threats by organized crime and from regulations that impose restrictions on the press. Phenomena originating from the world of communication, such as “alternative truth” and the proliferation of fake news sites, pose important

risks to the free and responsible exercise of freedom of expression.

With the same goal that we have set out to increase citizen confidence in democracy, gender parity in political parties, popular elections, courts of law and government positions can help us considerably. It was encouraging to note in the relevant panel that Latin America is one of the regions in the world in which more progress has been made towards recognising the political rights of women and their participation in political life. However, progress is still slow, which calls us to take the necessary actions to meet the call of UN Women and the Development Goals to achieve parity at all levels of social life by the year 2030. Ensuring women’s participation – as well as that of other minority groups – in political and decision-making processes is not only a matter of equity, but also of inclusion.

We cannot expect confidence in democracy to grow if a large proportion of the population is under-represented in decision-making bodies. Neither can we expect trust to grow if minority groups see their most fundamental rights of equality and personal fulfilment being abandoned or violated. The democratic ideal is inextricably linked to the realization of human rights, as stressed by the panel on Access to Justice. Wherever there are people whose basic citizenship rights are curtailed, seeking to increase confidence in democracy will always be an unattainable goal.

Finally, we address even more specific issues to improve Electoral Integrity in our countries, such as polling, electoral rolls, the incorporation of digital technologies, and international electoral observation. Policies such as these are necessary to guarantee the vote of each and every citizen, as well as increase popular confidence in the electoral system. More flexible and transparent voting, counting, and political financing control mechanisms can restore citizens’ confidence in electoral processes.



That confidence can also be seen increased by international electoral observation. Electoral Integrity is not an effort that interests each individual country; it is relevant to sister countries in the same region and to the international community as a whole. Fair, transparent and peaceful electoral processes are more likely to result in governments committed to national and international legality.

Finally, we also discussed the need to exercise active and responsible citizenship to make Electoral Integrity possible. Here we emphasized the importance of institutions, of laws and regulations, of new technologies. All these are essential factors in the equation to improve the functioning and quality of our democracies.

But we must not forget the most important component of that equation: the citizen. Democracy is, after all, the result of the aggregation of individual aspirations and preferences. We demand, then, that those aspirations and preferences are the result of a free and responsible exercise of citizenship. And that these aspirations and preferences come from citizens educated and committed to the collective wellbeing, not only to the satisfaction of individual wellbeing.

While there are structural threats to our democracies, the greatest risks they face come from the apathy of voters and the cynicism of some political leaders.

By strengthening citizens' confidence in the system, Electoral Integrity will allow us to combat this apathy and cynicism. It is a trust that is built in our parliaments, public offices, and courts, but also in our schools, colleges, and universities. Electoral Integrity is not only a public policy that is implemented, but a collective goal that is taught.

Dear friends, in his opening remarks, the executive director of the Kofi Annan Foundation reminded us that **“democracy is a work that is always in continuous progress,”** and that when **“people lose faith in democracy, political competition does not disappear, which adopts the most chaotic and violent forms imaginable.”** These wise words resonate especially at this moment in our region. The case of Venezuela confirms that the destruction of democratic institutions leaves behind chaos, violence and suffering. In the name of that heroic people who, despite everything, continue to hold on to democratic convictions, we dedicate a good part of our reflections in this meeting and outside it.

We leave with a fairly balanced list of tasks that we have started and tasks that are yet to be addressed. I am confident that from their positions and organizations we will be able to fulfil this list of outstanding recommendations, to launch new projects, and to renew others already initiated.

We are leaving with a mission in our hands to continue contributing to the construction of modern and durable democracies, that must become more inclusive and, above all, remain intact. The task is complex, but you are the best guarantee.

Thank you very much.



ANNEX 3: Selected press materials

News links

<http://www.excelsior.com.mx/nacional/2017/08/15/1181686>

<http://www.excelsior.com.mx/opinion/maria-marvan-laborde/2017/08/17/1182194>

<https://www.newsghana.com.gh/electoral-integrity-in-latin-america-high-level-summit-in-mexico/>

Photo gallery

<https://centralelectoral.ine.mx/2017/08/14/conferencia-integridad-electoral-en-america-latina/>

<https://centralelectoral.ine.mx/2017/08/15/sesion-de-conclusiones-y-clausura-de-la-conferencia-integridad-electoral-en-america-latina/>

Press releases

Kofi Annan

<http://www.kofiannanfoundation.org/supporting-democracy-and-elections-with-integrity/electoral-integrity-latin-america/>

<http://www.kofiannanfoundation.org/supporting-democracy-and-elections-with-integrity/eii-latin-america-takeaways/>

Electoral Commission of Mexico

<https://centralelectoral.ine.mx/2017/08/11/convocan-instituciones-conferencia-sobre-integridad-electoral-en-america-latina/>

<https://centralelectoral.ine.mx/2017/08/11/participara-el-ine-en-el-evento-integridad-electoral-en-america-latina/>

<https://centralelectoral.ine.mx/2017/08/15/integridad-electoral-reto-para-la-consolidacion-de-las-democracias-en-latinoamerica/>

Instituto Electoral – Ciudad de Mexico

<http://www.iecm.mx/>

Relevant INE Documents

<https://centralelectoral.ine.mx/2017/08/14/programa-conferencia-integridad-electoral/>

<https://centralelectoral.ine.mx/2017/08/14/discurso-de-lorenzo-cordova-en-la-ceremonia-inaugural-de-la-conferencia-integridad-electoral-en-america-latina/>

<https://centralelectoral.ine.mx/2017/08/14/necesario-fortalecer-la-democracia-en-america-latina-coinciden-instituciones-en-conferencia-sobre-integridad-electoral/>

<https://centralelectoral.ine.mx/2017/08/15/palabras-de-lorenzo-cordova-en-el-segundo-dia-de-la-conferencia-integridad-electoral-en-america-latina/>

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Between 2017 and 2018, ten countries across Latin America will hold presidential elections: Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay and Venezuela. Other countries in the region are in the process of reviewing their constitutional and electoral frameworks.

To encourage progress towards democratic ideals and strengthen the integrity of electoral processes, the Kofi Annan Foundation organised an international, high-level summit in Mexico City in association with the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (PARLATINO) and five Mexican partner organisations: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Electoral Institute, the Federal Electoral Court, the Specialized Electoral Attorney, and the Electoral Institute of Mexico City.

This report summarises the debates, conclusions and recommendations of the conference which brought together participants from 12 Latin American countries as well as international counterparts with experience of and expertise in democratic governance and Electoral Integrity. It has been published by the organisers to disseminate the conference's ideas and discussions.

The Electoral Integrity Initiative in brief

Elections are the established mechanism for the peaceful arbitration of political rivalry and transfers of power. In practice however, many elections actually prove deeply destabilizing, sometimes triggering conflict and violence. This series of policy briefs is part of the Kofi Annan Foundation's Electoral Integrity Initiative, which advises countries on how to strengthen the integrity and legitimacy of their electoral processes and avoid election related violence. Looking beyond technical requirements, the Foundation focuses on creating conditions for legitimate elections, making it possible to govern in a climate of trust and transparency.

For more information about our ongoing project visit:

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