

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

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**REMARKS AT FUSADES / UNDP  
CLOSING EVENT**

***Strengthening Dialogue and Democratic Institutions in El Salvador***  
**San Salvador, 29 April 2009**

Señora Vicepresidenta de la República, Licenciada Ana Vilma de Escobar,  
Señor Presidente de Fusades, Ingeniero Antonio Cabrales,  
Señora Representante Residente del PNUD,  
Licenciada Jessica Faieta,  
Distinguidos Miembros del Comité de Asesoría Estratégica,  
Señoras y Señores,

Tengo el gran honor de estar con ustedes hoy en esta ocasión tan propicia. El lanzamiento de este documento tiene lugar en un momento crucial de la evolución democrática de El Salvador. El Fondo de las Naciones Unidas para la Democracia está orgulloso de ser parte de este proceso.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me congratulate FUSADES and UNDP on bringing this ambitious undertaking to a successful conclusion. The fundamental goals of this project go to the very heart of the mission of the United Nations Democracy Fund. We salute your stated aims:

- To strengthen the ability of citizens to interact with their elected representatives;
- To advance transparency and accountability in the electoral system and in the legislative process;
- To foster more -- and better functioning -- dialogue and consensus building, in a way that is more responsive to citizens' demands.

We are equally delighted that you have as a cross-cutting objective to advance the participation of women in the democratic process. At UNDEF, we know that no endeavour for democracy, nor for development, can succeed without investing fully in the voice of women. In this context, I am delighted that tomorrow, I will have the chance to visit

UNDEF's other project in El Salvador, implemented by ASPARLEXSAL -- La Asociación de Parlamentarias y Exparlamentarias Salvadoreñas.

Allow me to take this opportunity to tell you a bit -- or boast to you a bit -- about the United Nations Democracy Fund. As a Trust Fund of the Secretary-General, created less than four years ago on the occasion of the 2005 World Summit, UNDEF is unique in many ways.

We are the only UN entity whose name contains the word "democracy". By working directly with civil society to seed democracy from within, we work to support the demand side of the democracy equation, rather than the supply side. By lending the UN brand to a project, we aim to bestow a convening power and multiplier effect that generate more democracy initiatives. In these ways, we complement the other work of the UN -- the work with Governments, to support efforts for democracy around the world.

For the United Nations, explicit efforts to support democracy are not an uncomplicated endeavour. The word "democracy", in fact, appears nowhere in our Charter -- though you may see it implied in the Charter's first three words "We the Peoples". Some would argue that the structure of the UN Security Council, which is based on very particular principles, is not in keeping with basic democratic principles -- even if some cynics would accuse the General Assembly of being too democratic for its own good! And a number of UN Member States are still only going through the motions of democracy, or quite openly do not subscribe to its values.

But at the same time, we know that supporting democracy must form a core part of the UN's mission. Experience has taught us, time and again, that democracy is essential to achieving our fundamental goals of peace, human rights and development. Consolidated democracies do not go to war against each other. Human rights and the rule of law are best protected in democratic societies. And as FUSADES has recognized with this project, development is much likelier to take hold if people are given a genuine say in their own governance, and a chance to share in the fruits of progress.

We know, therefore, that democracy support must take the form of support for the local people, from the grassroots up. Through this focus on civil society, the Fund recognizes a fundamental truth about democracy everywhere: that it is ultimately a strong and vocal civil society -- as we can hear and see here at FUSADES today -- that fosters responsible citizenship and makes democratic forms of Government work.

That is why multilateral approaches to democracy support are essential: they transcend the policies of any one nation. And of the multilateral approaches, the United Nations has the unparalleled advantage of bringing global legitimacy to its work.

En Centro América, y en toda Latinoamérica, el Fondo de las Naciones Unidas para la Democracia apoya proyectos en la mayoría de países -- grandes y pequeños. Desde los

vecinos Guatemala y Honduras hasta Argentina y Chile allá en el sur. Trabajamos con poblaciones tanto rurales como urbanas. Desde usar la informática para conectar Congresistas con sus votantes en las regiones remotas de Arequipa y Piura en el Perú, hasta entrenar mujeres candidatas para postular a Consejos Municipales en Río de Janeiro.

Aquí en El Salvador, esperamos que el proyecto “Reforzando el Diálogo e Instituciones Democráticas” se extienda en un futuro al país entero – para el beneficio de toda su valiente gente, a quienes el trabajo duro, el talento, la iniciativa y la inventiva les ha permitido llegar hasta este punto.

A través de este proyecto, ustedes está avanzando en la construcción del consorcio pro democracia entre El Salvador y las Naciones Unidas que comenzó ya hace 20 años, cuando las Naciones Unidas ayudaron a la concreción del acuerdo de paz.

Hoy, a través del trabajo conjunto de FUSADES y el PNUD, y las fuerzas respectivas de sus dos entidades, ustedes tienen los recursos para asegurar que el resultado de este proyecto sea realmente sostenible y duradero.

Esperamos ser testigos de los resultados de su trabajo en los años venideros, y acompañar a la valerosa gente de El Salvador en su viaje – bajo el Gobierno entrante, como lo hemos hecho con la Administración actual.

Muchas gracias.