

**Partners eDemocracy Forum**  
**Session II Topic: Democracy Around the World: A Discussion**

“The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world”

**Resources:**

**Suggested Introductory Readings:**

**About Democracy Dialogue: Read topics covered and resources used for the dialogue** [http://usinfo.state.gov/dd/democracy\\_dialogues/about.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/dd/democracy_dialogues/about.html)

**What is Democracy?**

<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/whatsdem/whatdm1.htm>

**Suggested further readings:**

1. Democracy is a Discussion: Civic Engagement in Old and New Democracies (The Handbook) Sondra Myers, Editor (Partners will order copies to be delivered to participating Freedom Volunteers)
2. Democracy is a Discussion II: The Challenges and Promise of a New Democratic Era (A Handbook) Sondra Myers, Editor (Partners will order copies to be delivered to Freedom Volunteers)
3. Making Democracy Work by Robert D. Putnam (Partners will order copies)
4. The Democracy Reader, Sondra Myers, Editor (To be delivered to Freedom Volunteers)

**5. Democracy's Challenge: A Democracy Dialogue**

[http://usinfo.state.gov/dd/democracy\\_dialogues/democracys\\_challenge.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/dd/democracy_dialogues/democracys_challenge.html) (By Peter Berkowitz)

6. Citizenship is Hard Work

<http://www.newtownbee.com/Opinions.asp?s=Opinions-2007-06-07-14-40-57p1.htm> (Lee H. Hamilton)

7. Fostering a More Engaged Citizenry Philanthropy's Role in a Civic Reawakening by John M. Bridgeland

<http://www.civicerprises.net/pdfs/pace.pdf>

8. Your country Constitution is a good reading tool.

9. <http://allafrica.com/stories/200706080547.html>: Nigeria at Crossroads: Elections, Legitimacy and way forward (United States Congress)

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What is the importance of consensus building in a democracy, and what role do trust, goodwill, and idealism play in this process?
2. Is democracy a *natural* form of government that will arise spontaneously or evolve in time without a specific effort to nurture it? What examples does history provide to support an answer?
3. Evaluate the rights granted to you by your political system. Which rights set boundaries and which are entitlements or “affirmative duties to promote actively the well-being” of citizens?
4. Why can't we just sit back and let the government take care of things? What are the consequences of the absence of citizen participation in government? Might dictatorial forces fill the vacuum?
5. How do you see your role in promoting civic engagement on the importance of democracy in your community?

“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men (women) to do nothing”