

## *Idasa's 20 year Anniversary*

### *Reflections.....*

*As part of Idasa's 20 year celebration, we invited all those who have been associated with Idasa to send us their comments, anecdotes and memoirs.*

*We have compiled these into a mini-booklet which can be kept as a memento.*

*We have included a few pictures taken at our 20 year celebration that was held at the Market Theatre, in Johannesburg, on the 27th September 2007.*

# MESSAGES OF SUPPORT FROM IDASA'S FOUNDERS



The building of institutions is fundamental in ensuring sustained peace and a human rights culture. This is particularly true of countries which are in transition from violent conflict and undemocratic rule.

Idasa was born at a time when South Africa was at a dangerous impasse. Its major goal was to encourage a negotiated transition between the state and those who struggled for a non-racial South Africa. Idasa made a significant contribution then and through the anxious lead-up to South Africa's first democratic election. By its name, it signified not merely an anti-apartheid organisation but a pro-democracy vision.

I am proud to have been associated with the founding of Idasa; I am even more proud that 20 years later Idasa continues to play an active role in the promotion of democracy.

Alex Boraine  
Co-founder  
Idasa

"IDASA is tangible proof that an idea can become reality"

Dr F van Zyl Slabbert





## **MESSAGES OF SUPPORT FROM IDASA FRIENDS AND PARTNERS**

From the inception Idasa has been characterised by extremely high quality leaders and analysts. From Van Zyl and Alex, through Wilmot and Paul, Idasa has been lead by very different but very talented individuals. This gives all your analysts the stamp of gravitas on their uttering and writings. May you continue to deliver wisdom with rigour over the next 20 years!

Cheers to you all!

Randall Falkenberg  
HPL Group

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To promote democracy is a big job, particularly in Africa, and to see immediate results is almost impossible. However, without organisations like Idasa the situation would be worse. Hold on and never get tired of doing a good job, there is still a lot to be done. Long Live Idasa!!!!

Matseliso Ntsoelikane  
Treatment Action Campaign

Congratulations and well done to all at Idasa, especially Paul Graham and Ivor Jenkins and their outstanding colleagues! Your contribution to South Africa's past twenty years has been tremendous. The next twenty will, however, be just as crucial. Strength to you all, as you encounter your daily battles for a better South Africa!

Best wishes

Vinodh

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Congratulations on your efforts and aims over the past twenty years; indeed, as FuzS reminds us, 20 very tumultuous years. And the next 20 years look like being no less fundamental and important with some extremely worrying storm clouds developing from the "Mbeki version of democracy".

More power to your pens!

Jon Quirk

When I compare the goals and aims of Idasa to its achievements so far; without any fear of contradiction from whomsoever I confess that the past 20 years of Idasa' existence have not been in vain, for it has done a remarkable job. I believe South Africans in general and supporters of democracy in particular should be very proud of Idasa.

I would also like to add here that it is not the name Idasa which has done the great work; but a team of hard working and committed ladies and gentlemen. I would like to extend my greetings and congratulations to each and every soul which contributed to the success of Idasa for these past 2 decades. I would also like to extend to the present staff my encouragements and moral support; I look forward to offer more than moral support if asked to. It is indeed a great pleasure to have a say in this occasion.

LONG LIVE IDASA

Kengni Bernard

Warm greetings on the 20th anniversary of Idasa.

I remember an informal meeting in an attic office at Diakonia, Durban, in the mid-eighties, with Alex, Paul and one or two others, at which the setting up of Idasa was discussed. Was it needed? How could it best achieve the purpose of promoting democracy in South Africa?

What contribution could such an organisation play at such a difficult time of increasing repression and resistance? This was but a sample of extensive consultations held across the country before Idasa was founded. At large meetings and small, opinions across a extensive spectrum were canvassed. The general consensus was: Go for it!

Twenty years later, so much has been achieved that any of us who have over the years been associated with Idasa in whatever small way can only feel proud and privileged to have been involved with its work and touched by its values.

Congratulations. And may the spirit in which you work, the values you hold dear, and the quality of all that you do continue long into the future to bring the hope and self-esteem, pride of achievement and depth of understanding, commitment to democracy and the sheer hard work of enabling people to participate in shaping their own lives and those of their communities, which are the hallmarks of your life as an organisation, both to South Africa and the rest of Africa.

Viva Idasa, viva!

Sue Britton

Anglican Parish of St John the Baptist

To the staff and whole family of Idasa, I would like to congratulate its commitment and dedication in transforming South Africa. On behalf of the Eastern Cape Youth Development Board I would like to wish Idasa many more years and say "Happy 20th Anniversary", may God gives everyone in Idasa a strength and more power to work and fulfil Idasa's mandate, vision and mission.

Mr. Viwe Sidali  
Eastern Cape Youth Development Board

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I am very proud to be one of the Idasa beneficiaries through different information on gender, human rights and social cultural issues.

I will take this anniversary as an opportunity to circulate information to more Tanzanians here so that they can also benefit from the Idasa resources.

Congratulation Idasa.

Lucas Charles Mkwizu  
White Orange Youth Organisation

I am proud to have been a part of Idasa's rich and valuable legacy and even though I am no longer an employee I look forward to continued interaction in the future. Congratulations on your 20th anniversary. May there be many more!

Very best wishes

Brett Davidson

Arts and Media Access Centre

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In a world struggling to deepen the principles of democracy, it is comforting to know that organisations like Idasa continue to challenge and confront, providing ongoing education and information for a better informed public.

Happy Birthday to you!

Dr Melanie Chait

Big Fish School of Digital Filmmaking

This is just to say, on this occasion of your 20th birthday, that we at The Evangelical Alliance of South Africa thank the Lord for Idasa. Your courage and commitment in strengthening our nation's democracy is laudable. Yours is a crucial civil society contribution in our day. May you see many more years in the struggle for the renewal of our democracy.

Blessing!

Moss Ntlha

TEASA

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Please accept our congratulations on Idasa's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary - may your institution see 20 more glorious years of playing a positive role in the evolution and consolidation of democracy throughout Africa. I regret that we may not be able to attend the celebrations in body, but we'll certainly be there in spirit.

Rafiq Hajat  
Institute for Policy Interaction (IPI)

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Dear Idasa,

We thank you for having enlightened our nation about issues of democracy and good governance for the past 20 years. More work still needs to be done to enforce a culture of democracy in South Africa. We wish you more years of good work for the sake of our young nation's democracy. Congratulations.  
Ujamaa Centre- Religion & Governance Programme, university of KwaZulu-Natal.

Grace and peace

Dr. Simanga R. Kumalo.  
University of Kwazulu Natal

I wish to add my voice to the many which are echoing congratulations to Idasa on the occasion of its 20th anniversary. Idasa has walked a long road with South Africa and has played an important role in consolidating our hard won democracy.

I believe its commitment over 20 years can be attributed to the founding dream of Dr Frederick van Zyl Slabbert and Dr. Alex Boraine, who established the institute in the midst of the struggle against apartheid and at a time when visionaries and pioneers were being stirred to forge change.

Idasa was born the same year I set up the KwaZulu Natal Indaba, which developed out of the Buthelezi Commission of 1980. The Indaba led to the formation of the KwaZulu Natal Joint Executive Authority, our country's first non-racial government. We pursued constitutionalism and democracy, believing that a liberated South Africa would need a strong government, and unwavering respect for the rule of law and citizenry that was involved, engaged and active in shaping South Africa.

I know that these same goals of active citizenship, democratic institutions and social justice are today pursued by Idasa as a means to ensure sustainable development. My own convictions have often met with kindred spirit in Idasa. From the outset, we both pursued a negotiated settlement and nurtured the politics of negotiation.

I have a deep respect for the work which Idasa accomplished in its early days before liberation. My respect has only grown as I have witnessed its work continue and now also in the countries of our neighbours. Over the years, my admiration for the spirit and integrity of Idasa's co-founder, Dr van Zyl Slabbert, developed into friendship. Recognising his commitment to our countries best interests, I appointed him Chairperson of the Electoral Task Team during my time as Minister of Home Affairs.

Dr Wilmot James, Idasa's former Executive Director who took over in 1994, also earned my respect as a champion of South Africa's wellbeing. In 1997, while he was still with Idasa, I appointed him Chairperson of the Green Paper Task Team to thrash out South Africa's best response to its sudden exposure to international migration in all its forms. I also appointed him Chairperson of the Immigration Advisory Board.

My Party, the IFP, followed the work of Idasa closely. We appreciated the in-depth research in this institution makes available and the apt commentary it continues to provide on our country, our Government and our democratic progress. Under your able leadership, Idasa is maintaining its position as one of South Africa's leading independent public interest organizations.

I hope that in the years to come, these first 20 years of Idasa will be seen as only the beginning. Today, I offer my warm congratulations on a job well done.

Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi  
President: Inkatha Freedom Party

WISHING YOU WELCOME ON YOUR 20TH BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY!

Dear Founders, The Board, The Executive and the Council Members of Idasa

As a movement whose concern it is to make manifest the idea of Oneness in all spheres of life through Spiritual Activism, Humanity's Team hereby wish to congratulate you on all of your achievements, and your dedication and perseverance over the past twenty years.

As a Civil Rights Movement for the Soul we support your tenet that involves the education of our citizens and your encouragement of their participation in the democratic process. For us this ties in with our own idea that Social Transformation manifests through Personal Transformation. Like you we believe that change becomes effective when the individual takes responsibility for change.

Humanity's Team believes that we are witnessing a world that has become dysfunctional because of its oppressive beliefs about God, Life and one another. As such we want to educate and encourage the citizens of the world to expand their beliefs and to live a life that reflects the understanding of Oneness.

As a young movement we want to thank you for your training programs that have already made a difference in how we are going about establishing ourselves locally as well as globally, to develop self-empowerment programs and to create a space where people can freely and actively debate the issue of Oneness.

Thank you for playing a role in "being the change you wish to see in the world" and for building a bridge into a new tomorrow.

We wish you all of the best for the future

Loving greetings

Anna-Mari Pieterse - Humanity's Team SA

It is with great pleasure that we congratulate Idasa on the occasion of your 20th anniversary.

Diakonia was one of many organisations consulted before Idasa was founded. We had no hesitation in encouraging the setting up of this new Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa, as it was first called in 1987, as it stood for the embodiment in society of the values for which we had been working in the churches since 1976. We had known both Alex Boraine and Paul Graham as key leaders of integrity and influence in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa. As Diakonia sought to mobilise the churches in the Durban area in the struggle against apartheid, Paul particularly had placed his many skills generously at the disposal of Diakonia, based as he was in Durban during those years: we collaborated on publications and social action.

Once Idasa was firmly established, collaboration continued. We were working to help the churches understand and promote democracy, Idasa had the expertise and resources to help us do that. We worked closely together on ways of countering the violence that wracked our province in the late 80s and early 90s, killing thousands and making hundreds of thousands internal refugees. A Diakonia staff person was seconded to be part of the pioneering work on developing training for party voting agents in the run-up to the first democratic elections in 1994.

And there was a continuous exchange of information and ideas, as our own democracy programme learned from Idasa and used its valuable training manuals. Idasa generously made its staff available to speak at Diakonia events, and to travel with us to Germany to attend joint conferences that we organised with our partners there. We worked together on the initiative for a KwaZulu-Natal Dialogue in 2002.

When Diakonia downsized in 2005, we were glad to give Idasa some of the books on democracy, governance and related issues from the resource centre we were closing, as a gift to Idasa's library, so that they would continue to be used. And so it goes on. These difficult and yet fruitful twenty years have changed the face of our country. At the time Idasa was founded in 1987, the future looked bleak indeed.

Today we can look back, celebrating amazing achievements, and renewing our commitment to continue to work for a world in which the values of democracy, participation, transparency and justice are valued and held dear by more and more citizens. We salute Idasa - this great organisation that started so small and today has offices in remote parts of Africa, and influence worldwide. Long may you continue!

Nomabelu Muambo-Dandala  
Diakonia

*IDASA, 2007 – Entering the Third Decade*

*Van Zyl, Alex, Paul, Ivor and all Idasa staffers.*

*Wish I could be there with you. But from the Northern Cape congratulations on the 20th year of doing splendid and courageous work!!*

*When Idasa was established it was a bold step with huge risks involved. Idasa walked and talked the talk to make democracy in action work. I believe Idasa played a crucial role in the establishment of our fledgling democracy between the end of 1986 and 1994.*

*And so, I believe the post 1994 task was as an important contribution.*

*Challenging as it is, one can look back with pride on the past achievements – and yet with the realization that we still have a long way to go. We still have to further inculcate in South Africa and region a democratic ethos aimed at equality rather than equity. And more, we need to further inculcate and nurture a spirit and attitude of principled non-racialism (that very ethos we fought for) but frequently seemed to have been forgotten by many of the old and new guard alike.*

*Idasa did it then. It can do it again.*

*Happy birthday guys and best wishes for the years ahead!!*

*Ian Liebenberg*

September 28, 2007

Dear Paul:

The members of the International Steering Committee of the Community of Democracies present at the September 25-26 ISC meeting in New York wish to congratulate you and the rest of Idasa on the celebration of Idasa's 20th anniversary. We are all very appreciative of and impressed by the work you continue to do on behalf of democracy in South Africa and Africa as a whole and with your leadership as chair of ISC's efforts in Africa. We wish you continued success in the years to come.

With best wishes for the future, sincerely yours,

Hoda Chalak, Civil Action Coalition (Lebanon)

Chee Siok Chin, Alliance for Reform and Democracy in Asia

Bernardo Ivo Cruz, Institute of Political Studies of the Catholic University of Lisbon

Goubacar Diallo, Executive Secretariat (CD)

Dokki Fassihian Democracy Coalition Project

Penelope Faulkner, World Forum for Democratization in Asia

Hannah Forster, African Democracy Forum

Morton Halperin, Open Society Institute

Sharon Hom, Human Rights in China  
Art Kaufman, World Movement for Democracy  
Mamadou Keita, Executive Secretariat (CD)  
Bob LaGamma, Council for a Community of Democracies  
Oumar Makalou, Executive Secretariat (CD)  
Mecacci Matteo, Transnational Radical Party  
Roel von Meijenfeldt, Netherlands Institute for Multiparty  
Democracy  
Gus Miclat, Philippines Initiatives for International Dialogue  
Ilona Mihaias, Euroregional Center for Democracy  
Ted Piccone, Democracy Coalition Project  
Dick Rowson, Council for a Community of Democracies  
Ash Roy, Institute for Social Science (New Delhi)  
May Sing, Taiwan Foundation for Democracy  
Bo Tedards, World Forum for Democratization in Asia  
Marc Traore, Executive Secretariat  
Vo Van Ai, Vietnam Committee on Human Rights  
Dieudonne Zognong, African Democracy Forum

Idasa would like to thank everyone who has been a part of our organisation for the past 20 years.

We would like to say a special thank you to everyone who attended the celebrations and for the kind words of encouragement and support expressed in this booklet.