



INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

Orderly presidential transitions challenge many countries. But recently a few leaders have introduced practices to ease handovers and ensure critical services and agreements continue when an incumbent party leaves office. The case studies featured this month focus on the evolution of these norms.

Charting a New Path: Indonesia's 2014 Presidential Transition

In 2014, Joko Widodo, popularly known as Jokowi, won Indonesia's presidency by a modest margin. The country had no rules about what the outgoing and incoming leaders should do to transfer responsibility for critical tasks. Incumbent president Yudhoyono and the director of his innovative delivery unit worked closely with Jokowi's transition team to prepare reports on key policies and programs. Key ministries also briefed their counterparts from the incoming administration. Despite a contentious election, the 2014 transfer of power between two popularly elected leaders marked the first coordinated presidential transition in the history of the world's third-largest democracy.

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Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (L) waves with President-elect Joko

Other ISS Case Studies on Presidential Transitions

In 2012, cooperation between the leaders of [Mexico's](#) two main rival political parties facilitated a smooth and stable transition of power. Outgoing president Felipe Calderón and incoming president Enrique Peña Nieto, together with their deputies, convened briefings over a period of five months, paving the way for a landmark political deal early in Peña Nieto's term.

As [Chile](#) prepared for the first handover between opposing political coalitions in the country's new democratic era, a massive earthquake struck, killing hundreds and causing significant damage. The incoming administration of Sebastian Piñera cooperated with the outgoing Michelle Bachelet to address the emergency and get to work quickly.

Ahead of [Ghana's](#) 2008 elections, a public policy think tank led major political parties in talks aimed at creating shared practices for the presidential transition process. At the same time, a policy unit in outgoing president John Kofuor's administration worked separately to improve the transfer of vital information and know-how. These initiatives created a stock which Ghana could draw on after its next election, scheduled for later this year.

ISS Featured Interviews

In their 2015 interviews with ISS, [Sigrid Arzt](#) and [Ernesto Cordero](#) discuss their respective roles in supporting Mexico President Felipe Calderón during his transition into office.

[Arzt](#), who joined Calderón's transition team in October 2006, describes her efforts to promote national and public security while serving in the newly-created role of presidential security adviser and explains the mission and vision behind Mexico's National Security Plan.

[Cordero](#), who was a top aide to Calderón during the selection of cabinet members, presents the structure of Calderón's executive branch with a focus on the Office of President. The strong Head of the Office position created by Calderón enabled him to successfully coordinate Cabinet activities.

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