



INTERNATIONAL DEMOCRAT UNION

To: IDU Executive Committee, Colombo 26 February 2016
From: The Secretary General
Re: MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS

1. Membership Criteria

The IDU has the following rules and procedures regarding membership:

“1. Membership of the IDU shall be open to all full members of the Regional Unions as well as to parties without clear regional identity with the existing unions.

2. All applicants wishing to join the IDU have to complete the application process as set out in Article D.7.

3. Member Parties shall have the right to participate in all IDU activities.

4. Other Parties and organisations may have Associate status to the IDU with the unanimous agreement of the member parties, and shall have consultative status.

5. Membership of the IDU is terminated by withdrawal from or exclusion by a regional union, or in the case of individual membership as defined in II (2) above, by the withdrawal from the IDU or by a vote by the member parties where at least two-thirds vote in the affirmative.

6. Any Member or Associate that has failed to pay its Membership subscription by the last day of the financial year in which it falls due shall be suspended automatically unless it has requested in writing, and received, special dispensation from the Executive Committee.

7. Parties wishing to join the IDU must have at least one IDU party prepared to ‘sponsor’ its membership. This party must be a full member of the IDU. It will take the lead in informing the IDU Executive about the applicant and guiding applicant parties through the admission process. The sponsor party does not have to come from the same region as the applicant. There is no limit to the number of sponsors an applicant party can have.

Applicant parties must also:

- Send a letter from the Party Leader or Chairman asking for membership;
- Provide a copy of the party’s statutes and rules;
- Submit an election manifesto or policy paper for scrutiny; and
- Invite the IDU to conduct a fact-finding visit.

An officer of the relevant IDU regional union must present the membership proposal to the Executive.

If determined that the membership criteria are met, the applicant party will be invited to present its application at a meeting of the IDU Executive. If approved by the Executive, not necessarily at the same meeting if further deliberations are considered necessary, the applicant from the time of the recommendation will be listed either as an Associate member (if not eligible for the full membership at that stage) or as an Observer recommended for full membership, to be invited to all IDU functions from then on.

8. The Party Leaders Meeting decides status of full membership, and - if so decided - the party will become a member with full rights after the Party leader or Chairman has signed the IDU Declaration of Principles.

9. Decisions to readmit former IDU-members may be made by the Executive Committee, provided that the Party Leaders meeting previously has approved IDU membership.”

2. Membership Applications

IDU presently has one membership application pending from a previous meeting of the Executive, regarding Afek Tounes (Tunisia). The IDU Executive in Marrakech welcomed their application and agreed to return to it at a future Executive after a fact-finding mission to Tunisia. Such a mission, chaired by Assistant Chairman Shane Stone, was scheduled to take place at the end of January/early February but was postponed after a nationwide curfew being

imposed at that time. The application is tabled until such a visit can be made, as discussed in Marrakech.

There currently is one new application.

a) BJP (India)

The BJP ('Bharatiya Janata Party' or 'Indian People's Party'), led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is the ruling party of India. In the May 2014 elections, BJP won an outright majority – the first party to do so since 1984. The party took 31% of the popular vote securing more than 171 million votes.

The party has 280 members in the 545-seat lower house ("Lok Sabha" or "House of the People") and leads the governing 13 party 'National Democratic Alliance coalition', which has 337 seats. The largest opposition party is the previously dominant 'Indian National Congress', which now has just 45 seats.

In the upper house BJP ("Rajya Sabha" or "Council of States"), BJP have 48 members of 245. Whilst the governing coalition does not have a majority in the upper house, most political power is vested in the Lok Sabha. The members of the Rajya Sabha are mainly indirectly elected and the upper house may not introduce or veto money bills nor bring confidence motions.

BJP in its modern form was founded in 1980, though its history can be traced back to the formation of the "Bharatiya Jana Sangh" Party in 1951, which was established as a counter-weight to the dominant Congress party. BJP is a Conservative Party whose official ideology is "integral humanism" – emphasizing the importance of maintaining India's culture and development in line with the country's traditions.

The BJP is the world's largest democratic political party by membership with more than 100 million registered members; actually also the largest of all the world's parties since the Communist Party of China's official number of members is 87 million. The President of the BJP is Amit Shah, who was re-elected in January 2016. The party has a well-developed structure including a women's section, youth section and a minorities section. In government, BJP is pursuing a program of pro-business reforms, including a radical simplification of the tax code aimed at creating a single Indian market and reducing the scope for official corruption.

In foreign policy, Prime Minister Modi has sought to improve relations and trade links with its neighbours and has strengthened India's role as a key international actor. He has recently undertaken a number of high profile visits to France, Canada, USA, Germany and the UK.

The BJP application is sponsored by the UNP (Sri Lanka).

Recommendation: To approve the Bharatiya Janata Party (India) as an Observer – with a view to become a full member at the next Party Leaders Meeting.