**The Arab Association of Constitutional Law, the Algerian Constitutional Council
and the University of Oran**

**issue this call for papers for:**

**A regional roundtable on
“Upper Chambers in the Arab Region”**

The Arab Association of Constitutional Law, the Center of Constitutional Research and Studies at the Algerian Constitutional Council and the ‘Laboratory of Law, Society and Power’ at the University of Oran will be holding a regional roundtable in Oran, Algeria on 14 December 2016. The roundtable’s theme will be: “Upper Chambers in Arab Constitutions”. In order to inform the discussions that will be taking place at the roundtable, the organisers are commissioning a number of papers, covering the following issues:

1. **Survey piece**: This will be a survey piece of the state of parliaments in and outside the region, with a focus on parliaments that have second chambers.  The purpose of the paper should be to determine what roles second chambers are supposed to play, what rules govern their functioning, and how effective they have been.  It should also focus on the powers that upper chambers have, particularly on financial matters, impeachment, confidence votes, the trade off between veto powers and delays to the legislative process, etc.
2. **The circumstances in which second chambers are necessary:** This paper will focus on whether, or when, second chambers are necessary.  Since 2011 both Egypt and Tunisia have abolished their second chambers.  Iraq and Lebanon’s respective constitutions both provide for the existence of second chambers but were never established.  Other countries in the region do have second chambers.  Do they really help the legislative process and/or representativity?  If so, then in what circumstances?
3. **Conditions for success:** In countries that do have a second chamber, what is the model that works best?  Directly or indirectly elected?  If they are to be appointed, then how should that process be organized at the national level?  Should members be experts or should they be laymen?  Should they represent geographic regions or should they represent the national interest?
4. **Regional representativity:** This paper should focus on the role that the second Chambers should play in ensuring regional representativity at the national level. Are second chambers effective (or necessary) at representing geographic areas and interests at the national level?  In what circumstances?  Have they had any impact in reducing regional disparities in wealth, income and service delivery?
5. **Institutional relationships:** This paper should focus on the relationship between second chambers and other state institutions, including lower chambers, the government and local administration.  What rules govern the relationship?  Whether there should be a mechanism for breaking deadlocks between the two chambers? Has the relationship led to improved state functioning, to a more effective law making process, and to better oversight of the executive branch of government?  Whether the powers and role of the Upper Chamber is affected by the nature of the regime as presidential, parliamentary, semi –presidential?
6. **Case studies**: The roundtable organisers also welcome country specific case studies on the functioning of upper chambers in the Arab region, or in other countries whose experiences are specifically relevant to the Arab region.

**Application instructions**

Individuals who are interested in participating in the roundtable that will take place in Oran, Algeria must submit an abstract in accordance with the following instructions:

1. If you are interested in carrying out any of the above studies, please send an abstract to Mr Wissam Benyettou at w.benyettou@idea.int no later than **17:00 Cairo time on 15 August 2016**.  Abstracts should be no longer than 400 words.
2. All abstracts will be considered. They may be submitted by individuals, co-authors or institutions. Membership in the Arab Association of Constitutional Law is not a requirement.
3. Abstracts and papers are strongly encouraged to adopt a comparative approach and present case studies. Abstracts and papers that focus on individual countries will still be considered.
4. Individuals from outside the Arab region who wish to submit an abstract that focuses on developments that are taking place outside the Arab region are encouraged to do so, while ensuring that all discussions are aimed towards furthering and enriching the discussion in the Arab region on the topics set out above.
5. Abstracts may be submitted in Arabic or English.

The individuals who will be selected to carry out the above studies will be required to prepare oral presentations summarizing their findings at the conference in Oran on 14 December 2016. Travel and accommodation costs will be covered. All the papers that will be issued pursuant to this conference will be published in a joint volume in both English and Arabic.