

Introduction

To celebrate the South Africa's historic 20th Anniversary of freedom and democracy, CIVICUS and its partners will gather change leaders from around the world in Johannesburg for International Civil Society Week in November 2014. International Civil Society Week will involve a diverse partnership of citizens, civil society organizations, academia, governments, donors, and private businesses that seek to tackle the world's most pressing challenges. Under the banner of "Citizen Action, People Power," the weeklong series of partner-led events will be the premiere global gathering of inspired thinkers, innovation leaders, and influential organisations.

Headquartered in Johannesburg, CIVICUS is honoured to be the organising host for the 2014 International Civil Society Week. The flagship event for the week will be the two-day CIVICUS World Assembly, which will culminate with the Nelson Mandela-Graça Machel Innovation Awards ceremony. The World Assembly will be complemented by three days of partner-led side events and the *citizen café*, a space for networking, exhibitions and information booths. With an estimated 500 attendees and 5,000 online participants, International Civil Society Week will empower social change and showcase South Africa to the global community.

Background

CIVICUS is the only global network of civil society organisations and activists dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society around the world. We are proudly based in Johannesburg, South Africa, and have over 1000 members in more than 120 countries.

Since 1995, The CIVICUS World Assembly has been a key international gathering for civil society, governments, donors and business to engage constructively in finding common solutions to global challenges. It stands as a unique convening space to connect concerned citizens across sectors, themes, regions and backgrounds. The World Assembly's main objective is to create a space where a diversity of voices can be heard, experiences exchanged, successes and challenges discussed, and, most importantly, a space that leads to concrete ideas for a more equitable and just world.

Previous World Assemblies

1995	Mexico City, Mexico
1997	Budapest, Hungary
1999	Manila, Philippines
2001	Vancouver, Canada
2004	Gaborone, Botswana
2006,	
2007,	Glasgow, Scotland
2008	
2010,	
2011,	Montréal, Canada
2012	

One of the World Assembly's strengths is its ability to act as a forum where groups from all sectors around the world come together to advance national, regional and global agendas, and find solutions to the crises that the world is facing today. In the past, the CIVICUS World Assembly has showcased headline names from various sectors, such as CEO and Founder of TechSoup, Daniel Ben-Horin; Managing Director of the World Bank, Caroline Anstey; Secretary General of Amnesty International, Salil Shetty; and The Elders, including Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Former United States President Jimmy Carter, Former President of Ireland and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson, and Mozambican politician and humanitarian Graça Machel.

The 2014 CIVICUS World Assembly will aim to build connections between civil society organisations with each other, with citizens and different forms of citizen action, and with government, academia, business, and media. In an effort to promote collaboration, the cross-pollination of ideas, and leverage resources, the 2014 World Assembly will be the anchor of a ‘partnered event’ – a model that was tested in the conceptualisation and implementation of the inaugural International Civil Society Week. In November 2013, CIVICUS, CONCORD/DEEEP, Global Call to Action against Poverty and International Civil Society Centre convened 13 different conferences, workshops and events. The 2014 International Civil Society Week, and thus the World Assembly, will build upon the successes of the 2013 event.

In addition to the fact that CIVICUS has called Johannesburg “home” for the past ten years, South Africa provides a shining example to the rest of the world of how citizens working together can contribute to democratic change. South Africa has a rich legacy of activism and involvement to bring about social transformation, and there are still many examples of positive citizen activism and engagement today. The timing and theme of International Civil Society Week provide an excellent opportunity for the world to look forward, but also to reflect and celebrate what South Africa has achieved in the past twenty years.

International Civil Society Week

The International Civil Society Week will provide an open space for CIVICUS and its partners to deliver a weeklong series of conferences, workshops, trainings, volunteer initiatives and cultural events. While the various activities that make up the programme must contribute to the overarching theme “**Citizen Action, People Power**”, potential partners will have the opportunity to propose specific topics, such as the role of philanthropic institutions in sustaining organisations that contribute to more democratic societies, or the relationship between civil society activists and established institutions and processes that are meant to facilitate democratic governance.

International Civil Society Week 2014 Objectives

Connect the different sources and forces of citizen action:

- Empower civil society to be more robust and effective
- Ensure diversity and multistakeholder engagement
- Encourage both formal and informal networking

Share tools and experiences for enhancing citizen action:

- Facilitate capacity building trainings and activities
- Amplify citizen voice through social media & technology
- Build awareness of importance of a vibrant civic space

Celebrate the power of innovation to affect social change:

- Enhance citizen participation and promote sustainability
- Highlight innovative leaders and stories of change
- Explore South Africa’s history of citizen action

CIVICUS will use its convening power and international outreach to bring local and international partners together to co-convene a diversity of civil society actors from around the world. Co-conveners will be asked to respond to an open call for expressions of interest and be selected based on the complementarity of their activity to the theme “Citizen Action, People Power”, as well as their ability to bring diverse actors to the week-long event. The theme of the week is particularly relevant given the current context. In recent years, the notion of active citizenship has gained prominence, emphasising the need for citizens and society at large to participate in the governance and utilise multiple forms of citizen engagement to address challenges and build a sustained democratic culture.

International Civil Society Week will involve a global partnership bound by a common aim to **connect** the forces that nurture positive social change, **share** the tools that enhance citizen action, and **celebrate** the ideas that build a freer and more democratic future. The first three days of the week will consist of a variety of events, meetings and workshops organised and implemented by local and international partners. The final two days of the weeklong civil society festival will be dedicated to the CIVICUS World Assembly and culminate in the Nelson Mandela-Graça Machel Innovation Awards ceremony and gala dinner.

In addition to plenary sessions, innovative experiential activities will occur leading up to and throughout the week. These will include site visits to inspiring local projects, volunteer opportunities, documentary screenings, arts exhibitions and tours to places of historical significance. Together, the activities aim to bridge the distance between the conference rooms and local environment, providing participants with opportunities for local interaction, service learning and practical experience. The experiential component of the programme will also allow participants to reflect on South Africa's past and present struggles and how these relate to their own struggles to realise more democratic and free societies at home.

World Assembly

As the flagship event of the 2014 International Civil Society Week, the CIVICUS World Assembly will gather inspiring people, innovative ideas, and organisations to share and celebrate best practices in citizen action. CIVICUS will utilise a hybrid format that multiplies the number of participants physically attending the event through technology, reducing the carbon footprint and vastly expanding its reach. Through plenary sessions, presentations, cultural explorations, and an awards banquet, participants will build knowledge and networks, celebrate and support innovation, and engage with South Africa's history and hope.

===The World Assembly will take place over two-days, and each day will consist of a morning programme and afternoon programme, which will alternate between short, TED-style presentations by prominent activists, thoughtful social change leaders or daring activists, and experiential activities. Presentations will be live-streamed and utilise a visually engaging format to enhance the experience of online participants. They will also encourage interaction between the presenters and online and offline participants' by utilising new technologies (SMS, Twitter, etc.) to field questions and enable live polling. Musical and other artistic performances will take place between presentations to maintain energy and enthusiasm.

CIVICUS World Assembly 2014 Objectives:

Participants will build skills to contribute to freer and more democratic societies in the context of their work and have renewed energy and motivation to undertake this work.

Attendance will encourage participants to:

- Improve collaborations with existing partners and forge new partnerships across sectors, themes, and regions
- Learn concrete ways and engage new technologies that promote citizen action for change

The series of events will be designed to foster longer-term engagement in citizen action. For example, when participants take the **'Be the Change'** challenge, they will take action, connect with others in their area of interest, seek support or offer help, and recognise and celebrate inspiring citizen heroes. Participants will be encouraged to share photos, videos, and blurbs of their experiences through social media to build momentum towards citizen action, encourage collaboration and innovation, and highlight the culture and promise of South Africa. In these ways, participants will continue to connect, share, and celebrate long after the week concludes.

The World Assembly (and International Civil Society Week) will culminate in the Nelson Mandela-Graça Machel Innovation Awards ceremony and gala dinner. The ceremony will celebrate civil society activism by rewarding individuals, organisations, and donors for their excellence, innovation, and brave risk-taking within grassroots development and governance initiatives. Since their inception in 2004, the Nelson Mandela-Graça Machel Innovation Awards have provided seed funding for 24 projects initiated in 19 different countries. The 2014 awards ceremony promises to be the largest in its history, with the possibility of a gala dinner that combines the award ceremonies and presentations of multiple, highly recognizable international organizations.

CIVICUS intends to produce a demographically representative and ecologically responsible event. To achieve the broadest representation, delegates will be actively encouraged through regional diversity (70% from the global south and 20% from South Africa), sectoral diversity (10% each from government and academia), and associational diversity (20% from non-formal civil society and 15% youth). Recognising the environmental impact of an international event of this scale, organisers will provide carbon offsets for flights and 'green' activities for participants to mitigate emissions that remain after reduction efforts. Further, the organisers will utilise local service providers and products whenever possible and promote cultural exchange to contribute to positive social and economic development.

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