

Context

To celebrate South Africa’s historic 20th Anniversary of freedom and democracy, CIVICUS and its partners will gather change leaders from around the world at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg for International Civil Society Week from 21-24 November 2014. International Civil Society Week will involve a diverse partnership of citizens, civil society organisations, academia, media, 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 host the 2014 International Civil Society Week. The flagship event for the week will be the CIVICUS World Assembly, which will culminate in the Nelson Mandela-Graça Machel Innovation Awards ceremony. The World Assembly will be complemented three days of partner-led events and the *Citizen’s Café*, a space for networking, exhibitions and information booths.

Background

CIVICUS is the only global network of civil society organisations and activists dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society around the world, with over 1000 member in more than 120 countries across the globe. Our vision is of a worldwide community of informed, inspired, committed citizens engaged in confronting the challenges facing humanity.

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. 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. The 2014 CIVICUS World Assembly will celebrate the contribution of citizen action and people power to realising a more just and equitable world.

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

Programme

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 related to the theme “*Citizen Action, People Power*”.

The week will commence with the Youth Assembly and opening ceremony, followed by a daylong programme of partner-led events aimed at facilitating connections between the different sources and forces of citizen action, another day of partner-led events aimed at sharing tools and experiences for enhancing citizen action, and finally, the CIVICUS World Assembly and CIVICUS

Nelson Mandela-Graça Machel Innovation Awards, which aim to celebrate the power of innovation to affect social change.

As the flagship event of the 2014 International Civil Society Week, the CIVICUS World Assembly will gather inspiring people and 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.

The World Assembly (and International Civil Society Week) will culminate in the Nelson Mandela-Graça Machel Innovation Awards ceremony. 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.

Through plenary sessions, presentations and cultural explorations, International Civil Society Week participants will build knowledge and networks, celebrate and support innovation, and engage with South Africa's history and hope.

Objectives

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.

Connect the different sources and forces of citizen action:

- Empower civil society to be more robust and effective
- Ensure diversity and multi-stakeholder 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 new technologies
- 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

ICSW 2014 At a Glance

21 Nov	Setting the Scene - Youth Assembly - Opening Ceremony
22 Nov	Connect - Partner-led events
23 Nov	Share - Partner-led events
24 Nov	Celebrate - World Assembly - Innovation Awards
25 Nov	24HoursMore - Jo'burg tour

Social and Environmental Considerations

CIVICUS intends to produce a demographically representative and ecologically responsible event. To achieve the broadest representation possible, delegate outreach will focus on regional diversity (70% from the global south and 20% from South Africa), sectoral diversity (10% from government, business, academia and media), and associational diversity (20% from non-formal civil society and 20% 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.