



CIVICUS Civil Society Index – Rapid Assessment

Study of civil society in Senegal

A strong identity for civil society, but a need to complete the awakening of civic consciousness

2014

Table of contents

| | |
|---|----|
| List of tables and figures | 3 |
| 1. Introduction | 4 |
| 2. CSI-RA approach | 6 |
| 2.1 Definition of civil society | 6 |
| 2.2 Development of the CSI-RA | 6 |
| 2.3 Key features of the CSI-RA | 7 |
| 2.4 Conceptual framework of Senegal CSI-RA | 8 |
| 2.5 Methodological approach | 8 |
| 2.6 Expected results | 8 |
| 2.7 Research methodology | 9 |
| 3. Civil society in Senegal | 10 |
| 3.1 Concept of civil society | 10 |
| 3.2 Types of civil society | 10 |
| 3.3 Characteristics of Senegalese civil society | 10 |
| 4. Analysis of CSI-RA findings | 12 |
| 4.1 Structure of civil society | 12 |
| 4.2 Environment for civil society | 14 |
| 4.3 Civil society values | 15 |
| 4.4 Impact | 20 |
| 5. Strengths and weaknesses of CSOs in Senegal | 22 |
| 6. Recommendations | 24 |
| 7. Conclusion and next steps | 25 |
| Resources | 26 |

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List of tables and figures

Table 1: Distribution of community sample by region and gender 9

Table 2: Estimated membership of CSO networks 13

Table 3: Effectiveness of CSO networks 13

Table 4: Assessment of cooperation among CSOs 14

Table 5: Existence of laws restricting CSO advocacy 14

Table 6: Degree of state interference in the affairs of CSOs 15

Table 7: Assessment of state-civil society dialogue 15

Table 8: Existence and frequency of campaigns to promote democracy by CSOs 15

Table 9: Assessment of importance of the promotion of democracy to CSOs 15

Table 10: Levels of corruption in CSOs 16

Table 11: Extent of CSOs' promotion of tolerance within society 17

Table 12: Significance of CSOs' role in promoting tolerance 17

Table 13: Perceived influence of CSOs on public policies 20

Table 14: CSO effectiveness compared to the state 20

Table 15: Confidence in different public actors 21

Figure 1: Assessment of CSO self-regulation efforts 13

Figure 2: The role of CSOs in promoting government transparency 16

Figure 3: Examples of CSO activities to promote non-violence and conflict resolution 18

Figure 4: CSO initiatives to eradicate poverty 18

Figure 5: Assessment of the contribution of CSOs to poverty eradication 19

Figure 6: CSO initiatives in environmental protection 19

1. Introduction

A strong civil society is an essential actor in promoting the rule of law, effective development and the fairness of state and private sector institutions.

Senegalese civil society demonstrated its central role in promoting genuine democracy and active citizenship during the 2012 elections. Its status was acknowledged when US President Barack Obama chose to meet civil society leaders during his visit in Senegal in April 2013. Before this, the rise of a range of public-spirited social movements in 2011 and 2012 underlined the vitality of Senegalese civil society and its deep attachment to democracy and peace.

These new evolutions in Senegalese civil society prompted a need to review the state of civil society, as a follow-up on the previous Senegal Civil Society Index (CSI) study undertaken between 2008 and 2010. More broadly, analysis of the previous CSI by CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation suggests that civil society exists in a state of volatility, with new social movements fast emerging, civil society organisations (CSOs) facing numerous challenges, and relations between CSOs and governments, businesses and other social actors being called into question. In the light of this, CIVICUS developed a new civil society self-assessment tool, the Civil Society Index – Rapid Assessment (CSI-RA) in order to enable faster and more nationally specific assessments.

The main objectives of the CSI-RA are to help civil society to assess its strengths, challenges, potentials and needs; to strengthen the evidence base for advocacy to strengthen civil society; and to offer a platform for CSOs to come together and develop shared strategies around common challenges and opportunities.

This report should therefore be seen as a complement to the previous report on the state of Senegalese civil society, published in 2011 by Forum Civil, in partnership with CIVICUS and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The relevance of the CSI-RA to civil society in Senegal

Senegal can be said to have an established tradition of democratic elections, which also means that CSOs have had opportunities to partner with government, and an associative fabric has gradually been established, supported by funding provided by external donors, which have provided support directly to CSOs as well as the state.

The term 'civil society' in Senegal can be characterised as follows: a vague concept, a colourful reality, a problematic role, and an important contribution, but with little systematic engagement or understanding:

1. A fuzzy concept: there is confusion about the identity of CSOs, to the extent that the term may be said to mean most things to most people.
2. A colourful reality: a distinction from the state is recognised as necessary, but difficult to apply in practice, because of the political culture and the nature of power relations.
3. A problematic role: there is a lack of consensus on the place, roles and responsibilities of civil society, and its added value to the state and the private sector.
4. An important contribution, but with little systematic engagement or understanding: despite an undeniable contribution to the public in terms of performance and engagement, work is unsystematised, and CSOs cannot hope to meet the scale of expectations placed on it, or scale up to offer an alternative to conventional models.

Difficulties in grasping and operationalising the concept of civil society in Senegal, as in the much of sub-Saharan Africa, is partly related to the context of the birth and evolution of these states. Unlike European countries, where the construction of the state occurred over several centuries, postcolonial West African states were forced to develop quickly. The social contract that may be understood to exist in European states, which underpins citizenship on the basis of an implied bargain between state and citizen, is lacking; there little feeling of ownership of the state by citizens, and many still perceive the state as an entity divorced from them. This influences the conditions for civil society.

CSOs themselves may also be seen as an imported design, if one that is currently en vogue, but not one that is yet understood by the grassroots. Some CSOs can be seen as having emerged in a top down rather than bottom up manner, with projects disconnected from citizens, and some opportunistic behaviour to seek funding.

It is in these contested circumstances that a thorough review of Senegalese civil society is of strategic importance for all relevant actors. There is a need for benchmarks, not just to help give definition to civil society, but also to contribute to establishing an operational framework to make civil society's role in democracy and development more real.

2. CSI-RA approach

2.1 Definition of civil society

Civil society is a complex concept. The task of defining it, identifying its essential characteristics and attempting to assess its health is a complex, and potentially controversial, process. CIVICUS' working definition describes civil society as "...the arena, outside of the family, the state and the market, which is created by individual and collective actions, organisations and institutions to advance shared interests." This definition draws attention to issues of power, both within the civil society arena and between civil society and state institutions and the private sector. Civil society is also defined according to its activity and function, rather than by its organisational characteristics.

The CSI-RA process allows for local adaptation of the definition, and accordingly the Advisory Group for the CSI-RA revised that definition to the following, which it felt best describes the nature of civil society in Senegal: "The circle outside the family, the state and business, which is created by individual and collective actions and organisations to pursue common interests of their members or to defend the interest of the people."

2.2 Development of the CSI-RA

Since its inception in 1993, CIVICUS has strived to make a significant contribution to understanding the rise and evolution of civil society around the world and to build a knowledge base of civil society-related issues through research led and owned by civil society. The first step towards achieving this was the compilation of civil society profiles of 60 countries in the New Civic Atlas, published in 1997. This report provided concise and current information on the basic features of civil society in those countries, although it lacked consistency with regard to the issues covered.

In order to improve this exercise and move towards a more rigid comparative framework of analysis that would allow lessons to be drawn across countries, CIVICUS, with financial assistance from the UNDP, the Netherlands Organisation for International Development Cooperation (NOVIB), and the Commonwealth Foundation, began to explore the development of the CSI.

After multiple consultations with members and partners, the pilot implementation phase began in 2000 in 13 countries, in partnership with national organisations. A first full phase of the CSI took place between 2003 and 2006, with the participation of more than 60 countries. However, it was acknowledged that there was need to better engage and reflect the views and priorities of informal citizens' associations.

A resulting revision of the CSI methodology led to a second phase of the project from 2008 to 2011 resulting in a more locally owned and participatory action-research project. It intended to create a knowledge base and momentum for civil society strengthening, by encouraging civil society self-reflection and analysis amongst a broad range of civil society stakeholders. During this second phase, a total of 35 countries completed implementation of the CSI. The 2011 CIVICUS report *Bridging the Gaps: Citizens, organisations and dissociation*, summarises the findings of this second phase of the project.

Changing realities and pressing needs

Informed by its findings from the 2008-2011 CSI, CIVICUS sees that in many countries around the world, CSOs exist in a state of heightened volatility, flux and disconnect, with the paradigms that shaped definitions of and relations between state, market, media, civil society and other social actors in the late 20th century all coming into renewed questioning.

At the same time, CIVICUS' tracking of trends in legislation and policy towards CSOs suggests that there is a need for research and action to focus on the establishment and promotion of a more enabling environment for civil society. No matter the shape that civic action takes, there must be appropriate legal and policy provisions to allow the maximum possibility for people to express themselves freely, demand alternatives and organise and gather in collective spaces.

2.3 Key features of the CSI-RA

The CSI demonstrated during its two phases the limitations of a standardised methodology: it could not adequately capture local nuances due to a requirement for international comparability, and it could miss rapid civil society evolution due to long project lead times. To address these, CIVICUS developed the CSI-RA tool.

The purpose of the CSI-RA is to support civil society self-assessments in order to enhance the strength and sustainability of civil society for positive social change. It intends to help civil society to better assess its strengths, challenges, potentials and needs in a range of different situations and contexts. This will contribute to strengthening the evidence base for civil society advocacy; provide a platform for civil society to identify shared needs; and assist the planning and strategising of civil society around common challenges and opportunities.

Some key features of the CSI-RA conceptual framework are:

Local ownership: The CSI-RA is a collaborative effort where CSOs lead the process of assessing their own context by involving a broad range of stakeholders. The CSI-RA seeks to be as empowering as possible towards national partners, while recognising a specific but limited role for CIVICUS in providing initial capacity building, international coordination, technical assistance and quality assurance. In the CSI-RA, local civil society actors take the lead as they design their own civil society assessments and action plans. The outputs produced from the assessment are determined by local partners according to what best adds value to civil society in the particular context. The process through which the research is conducted and the analysis carried out is important in its own right: implementing the CSI-RA is an opportunity for civil society actors to convene and form coalitions, raise awareness around critical issues, promote participation and reflection and build capacity for civil society.

Embracing complexity: It is impossible to capture the complex reality of civil societies across the globe with a small number of indicators, no matter how carefully chosen. Therefore, the CSI-RA promotes the use of multiple indicators and strives for an assessment that is able to identify civil society's key assets and challenges in a particular context, whether in general, or focused on a specific dimension as determined locally, and explore their causes.

Disaggregating data: As much as possible, the research methods that the CSI-RA provides are chosen to allow for optimal disaggregation of findings. In a number of indicators and variables, the disaggregation of research findings by crucial demographic characteristics (e.g. gender, socio-economic status, geographic location, CSO working area) is encouraged. Both quantitative and qualitative data can be generated.

Building on existing knowledge: In designing the project framework, and especially in defining dimensions and indicators, the CSI-RA encourages partners to draw as much as possible on existing concepts, scales, indicators and operational tools relevant to the context. This increases local applicability and facilitates engagement with other civil society initiatives in the context.

Adaptability: The CSI-RA is designed to be highly adaptable to any context, including sub-national, sector-specific or thematic contexts. Depending on the context and objectives of an assessment, questions and indicators can be omitted, added or modified. A variety of processes and technologies can be used to address questions and indicators, according to what works and is appropriate, and tailored to resource and time constraints. As part of the adaptation process, the local partners, through intensive participatory techniques, identify the main goals and objectives, and expected outputs and outcomes of the project.

2.4 Conceptual framework of Senegal CSI-RA

The CSI-RA can be applied to evaluate various different dimensions of civil society. The four selected for focus in Senegal were: (1) the structure of civil society; (2) the external environment in which civil society exists and functions; (3) the values of and propagated by civil society; and (4) the impact of civil society activities. Each dimension is divided into several sub-dimensions, each of which has a number of potential indicators. As well as the value of the data itself, the process of conducting the research and analysis is considered an important output in its own right, as an opportunity for convening civil society, building consciousness, and enabling collective reflection and capacity building.

2.5 Methodological approach

The main stages of the implementation of the index were as follows:

Programme activities of the Senegal CSI-RA were implemented by a National Index Team of three people, consisting of a representative from Forum Civil, the National Coordination Organisation, a civil society expert and a researcher. This team was supported by CIVICUS and West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI).

The National Implementation Team (NIT) performed a preliminary stakeholder analysis and pulled together an Advisory Group (AG) of 12 people, representing different parts of civil society.

A review of secondary data was carried out and submitted to the AG, which then conducted a social forces analysis, in which the main actors in and power relations of Senegalese society were identified and mapped to help contextualise civil society.

Following this, primary research was conducted. Senegal was divided into five zones and a range of CSOs in each zone was asked to take part in a survey. This approach helped to reach different local stakeholders and bring in a wide range of voices to make the research representative research. Participants also took part in a one-day discussion group, and community members were interviewed to obtain data on, among other matters, their activities in civil society and their attitudes and commitment to CSOs.

All information collected was then analysed, and the AG assigned scores for each indicator according to a scoring guide. An average score of these indicators was made for each sub-dimension and dimension. The AG then discussed and approved the various outputs of the research, and also discussed strategies and actions to respond to the issues identified.

2.6 Expected results

Expected results as identified at the start of the process were:

- Improved knowledge on the state of civil society;
- A new impetus for civil society actors to strengthen civil society;
- Strengthened civil society linkages.

2.7 Research methodology

Sampling

A sample of 1,000 citizens was given the community survey, while 25 CSOs were issued with the questionnaire. This was broken down by area as follows:

Table 1: Distribution of community sample by region and gender

| Area | Region | Gender | | Total |
|--------------------|-------------------|---------|-------|-------|
| | | Man | Woman | |
| Dakar | Dakar | 228 | 228 | 456 |
| Kaolack | Diourbel | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| | Kaolack | 33 | 36 | 69 |
| | Fatick | 34 | 37 | 71 |
| | Sub-total | 69 | 73 | 142 |
| Saint Louis | Saint Louis | 37 | 39 | 76 |
| | Louga | 41 | 42 | 83 |
| | Matam | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| | Sub-total | 79 | 81 | 160 |
| Tamba | Tambacounda | 57 | 57 | 114 |
| | Kedougou | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| | Sub-total | 58 | 58 | 116 |
| | Ziguinchor | Sedhiou | 8 | 3 |
| Ziguinchor | | 55 | 60 | 115 |
| Sub-total | | 63 | 63 | 126 |
| Total | | 497 | 503 | 1,000 |

Sharing and update workshop

A workshop to share the objectives of the study and coordinate efforts amongst researchers was also held in Thies in August 2013. The workshop was attended by 10 investigators, two officers, the statistician and the researcher. It enabled participants to gain a better understanding of the project, validate the methodology and survey tools and plan the implementation of surveys in the five targeted areas. A test of questionnaires and interview guides was carried out at the same time.

3. Civil society in Senegal

3.1 Concept of civil society

In a broad sense, civil society refers to a social sphere distinct from the state and political parties, formed of all organisations and individuals whose work contributes to the emergence and affirmation of a collective social identity. It can be seen as an essential part of democracy, and a counterweight to the power of the state, needed for human rights and the rights of citizenship to be upheld.

Relationships between civil society and other actors are complex and may be ambivalent, but are not necessarily conflictive. They can be affected by whether a government is democratic or authoritarian, and levels of political development.

3.2 Types of civil society

Cohen Erato identifies four main types of civil society:

- the private sphere (family)
- the sphere of voluntary associations
- social movements
- forms of public communication

While Professor Moussa Samb distinguishes four groups, specifically in African civil society:

- Independent professionals (such as lawyers, teachers, unions and opinion leaders)
- Formal organisations, such as NGOs
- Identity-based groups, such as those based on religion, or ethnic or tribal identity
- International NGOs, donors and foundations

3.3 Characteristics of Senegalese civil society

Although typically, most Senegalese citizens would equate the concept of civil society with NGOs, in reality there are a multitude of organisations with a diversity of interests. Senegalese civil society can be considered as rich, diverse and complex, and that complexity often leads to conceptual confusion. However, there is agreement on the fact that what constitutes the essence of civil society is that it is willing to take on state power, and to challenge power-holders on behalf of the people.

Senegalese civil society should be understood as a place of expression and diversity, and a crucible of new expressions. It should be seen as encompassing the informal, such as vendors or hawkers' associations, who are involved in the underground economy. This is an arena of those who may be ubiquitous but are invisible in the statistics, where actors can organise independently and claim space, as for example, in the case of authorities having eventually to acknowledge informal associations and integrate them into their development policies for urban space.

Since the last presidential elections in 2012, Senegalese civil society has become more assertive as a key player in the democratic process. It has acquired a higher profile, and can be seen to have developed stronger legitimacy among populations. However, confusion remains, as some civil society actors have become allied with political parties or particular civic movements. This has helped blur the concept, particularly on the question of where it is distinct from political parties and the state. This is exacerbated by the recent movement of some of civil society's iconic figures into ministerial positions or state institutions. There is also a trend for some groups and movements to move into the political field, in particular by

promoting independent candidates. These operations are explained, by some of them, as responding to a need to renew a political class that has largely failed, but many people in political parties see civil society as being manipulated. A section of the population believes that some members of civil society have discarded their ideals and used civil society as a stepping stone to get into government.

Conceptual questions remain: what kind of organisations, in Senegal, should be considered as members of civil society? Where do citizens' movements fit in? Where should civil society meet with political society? If there is no line of demarcation between civil society and the pursuit of political power, should civil society's goal be power, even when local power? If so, how can civil society still fulfil its essential role as a counterweight to the state? There are conflicting opinions about these issues amongst the public, and as expressed in the media.

IV. Analysis of CSI-RA findings

This section outlines the results of the research and consultations undertaken during the CSI-RA.

4.1 Structure of civil society

4.1.1 Scope of citizen participation

This sub-dimension assesses the extent of the involvement of citizens in civil society, as an indicator of the overall size and strength of civil society. Indicators include the percentage of citizens who undertake non-partisan political action, donate to charities, are members of CSOs, practice voluntary work and participate in community activities.

Non-partisan political actions are taken to include writing a letter to a newspaper, signing a petition, or participating in a public event. Altogether only 25% of those who took part in the community survey have taken part in these activities, suggesting a significant participation gap. This level of participation rises to 40% when only people who are members of CSOs are considered, suggesting that those who participate in formalised civil society are also more likely to participate individually. 65% of the community sample is a member of a CSO, suggesting that CSOs offer a strong platform for participation.

The role of CSOs in supporting citizens' participation could be seen in the 2012 elections, when stakes were high and there were multiple tensions. CSOs helped to promote a fair electoral process and non-violence, they educated citizens on how to mobilise to vote, initiated public debates of candidates, and observed elections and enabled real-time reporting on problems. In these measures, they contributed to developing active citizenship. Other CSO initiatives observed include those that develop citizen participation in and accountability over the management of natural resources, extractive industries, the fight against corruption and local development.

4.1.2 Diversity in civil society

As the CSI-RA considers civil society as an arena where conflicting interests and power relations are present, the equitable representation of different social groups, particularly typically marginalised and vulnerable groups, within civil society is considered an important characteristic. This sub-dimension looks at the participation of women, minorities and other social groups in the leadership and membership of CSOs. It is also interested in the geographical representation of CSOs to determine if rural populations or specific regions of Senegal are underrepresented.

It appears that significant social groups are indeed under-represented in CSOs, according to regional consultations: women and ethnic minorities are assessed as somewhat underrepresented, while rural populations are assessed as substantially underrepresented. Further, according to the regional consultations, when it comes to the leadership of CSOs, women, ethnic minorities and rural groups are underrepresented.

When it comes to geographical distribution of CSOs, almost 80% of respondents believe that CSOs are rather concentrated in urban areas, especially large cities.

In summary, gender equality, and inclusion of ethnic minorities and rural populations, do not seem to be significant realities in the composition and leadership of CSOs. There is a need to improve this to ensure that greater representativeness enables civil society to gain in relevance and effectiveness.

4.1.3 Level of organisation

This sub-dimension assesses the parameters of the basic structure of organised civil society, indicating its stability and maturity, as well as its capacity for collective action. Individual indicators consider the existence and effectiveness of CSO umbrella organisations and self-regulatory efforts.

Existence and effectiveness of CSO networks

CSO representatives generally believe that only a minority of CSO networks have become institutionalised, with CSO membership of networks estimated at average levels of 30% to 50%. The AG confirmed this view.

Table 2: Estimated membership of CSO networks

| | No response | Less than 20% | Between 20 and 40% | Between 40 and 60% | More than 60% | N/A |
|--------------|-------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------|-----|
| Total | 4% | 16% | 16% | 20% | 4% | 40% |

Effectiveness of umbrella organisations

CSOs were asked to what extent they believe CSO networks are able to achieve their defined goals. Opinions are mixed, between 36% of respondents who believe that they are somewhat effective and 40% who feel they have low effectiveness.

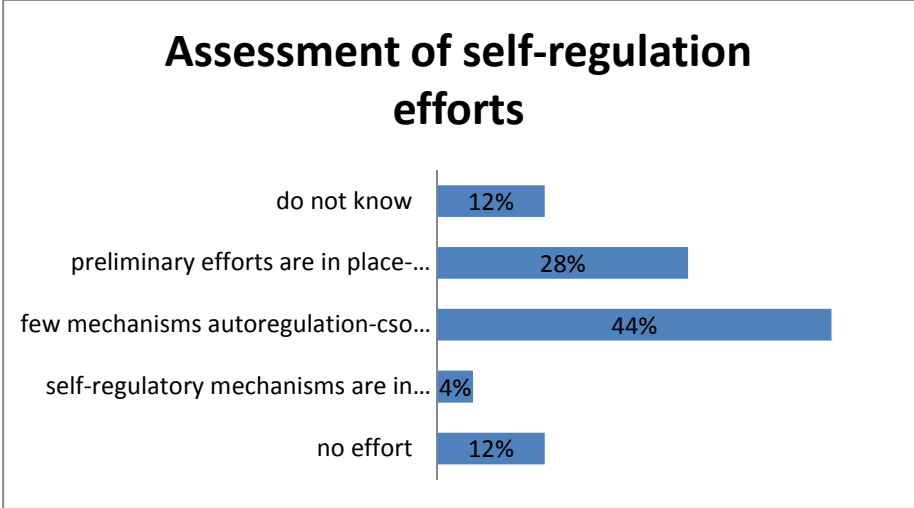
Table 3: Effectiveness of CSO networks

| | No response | Ineffective | Not very effective | Averagely effective | Somewhat effective | Successful | N/A |
|--------------|-------------|------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|------------|-----|
| Total | 4% | 8% | 32% | 20% | 16% | 0% | 20% |
| | | Ineffective 40% | | Somewhat effective 36% | | | |

Self-regulation efforts

CSOs were also asked about the existence of self-regulatory efforts, and to what extent these are effective.

Figure 1: Assessment of CSO self-regulation efforts



he findings, as set out above, are that there are some self-regulation efforts, but many CSOs lack these, and the impact of self-regulation efforts is limited.

4.1.4 Cooperation

An important determinant of the strength of civil society is the extent to which various CSOs communicate and cooperate with each other. This sub-dimension explores examples of cooperation as an indicator of the extent of linkages and productive relations within civil society.

Cooperation between CSOs

Examples of cooperation between CSOs abound, but these appear not to be systematised, and are still insufficient for some (16%). There are some examples of CSO alliances and coalitions being built around specific topics of common interest.

Table 4: Assessment of cooperation among CSOs

| | None | Few | Some | Many | N/A |
|--------------|------|-----|------|------|-----|
| Total | 4% | 16% | 44% | 24% | 12% |

4.2 Environment for civil society

4.2.1 Legal environment

This sub-dimension assesses the extent to which the legal environment is considered favourable or unfavourable for CSOs. This topic has been the subject of considerable attention by researchers. Specifically, this indicator considers legal constraints on the advocacy activities of CSOs.

Legal restrictions on CSO advocacy

Table 5: Existence of laws restricting CSO advocacy

| | No response | Disproportionate restrictions | Few restrictions | No restrictions | N/A |
|--------------|-------------|-------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----|
| Total | 4% | 4% | 36% | 36% | 20% |

The AG confirmed that this was a correct assessment, stating that constraints on advocacy CSOs are minimal and clearly defined.

4.2.2 State-civil society relations

This sub-dimension seeks to ascertain the nature and quality of state-civil society relations, by exploring indicators of CSO autonomy and state-civil society dialogue.

Autonomy

Only 20% of those interviewed believe that government does not interfere in the activities of civil society. Most believe that it happens sometimes (40%) or rarely (20%). No interviewee however believes that interference is common.

Table 6: Degree of state interference in the affairs of CSOs

| | No answer | Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | N/A |
|--------------|-----------|-------|--------|--------------|------------|-----|
| Total | 4% | 20% | 20% | 40% | 0% | 16% |

After analysis, the AG concluded that CSOs act freely and are subject only to reasonable control due to legitimate reasons of public interest, scoring this indicator 3 out of 3.

State-civil society dialogue

Civil society dialogue with the state appears quite open, but still needs to be consolidated. The AG assessed that the state dialogues with a relatively large group of CSOs, but on a largely ad hoc basis, and thereby awarded a score of 2 out of 3 for this indicator.

Table 7: Assessment of state-civil society dialogue

| | Non-existent | Limited | Average | Extensive | N/A |
|--------------|--------------|---------|---------|-----------|-----|
| Total | 8% | 56% | 28% | 8% | 0% |

4.3 Civil society values

In this section, the extent to which CSOs internalise, model and promote progressive values, such as democracy, tolerance and non-violence, is assessed.

4.3.1 Internal democracy

This sub-dimension gauges the extent to which CSOs promote democracy at the societal level.

Promotion of democracy by civil society

CSO representatives were asked if they could identify examples of public campaigns, actions of programmes of civil society to promote democracy.

Table 8: Existence and frequency of campaigns to promote democracy by CSOs

| | No answer | None | Only one or two examples | Some examples | Many examples | N/A |
|--------------|-----------|------|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|-----|
| Total | 12% | 8% | 36% | 20% | 12% | 12% |

Some examples of notable efforts were reported, but a challenge emerges, given that most CSOs are rated as having a low level of activity to promote democracy in society.

However, the contribution of CSOs in the promotion of democracy is considered important by 60% of people interviewed.

Table 9: Assessment of importance of the promotion of democracy to CSOs

| | Insignificant | Limited | Moderate | Important | N/A |
|--------------|---------------|---------|----------|-----------|-----|
| Total | 8% | 24% | 4% | 60% | 4% |

The AG assigned the highest score, 3 out of 3, for this indicator, determining after analysis that CSOs focus on the promotion of a democratic society, and that CSO activities in this area experience widespread support and strong public visibility.

4.3.2 Transparency

This sub-dimension examines corruption and financial transparency within civil society, and civil society actions to promote transparency at the societal level.

Levels of corruption within civil society

Consultations with CSOs reveal that a reality of corrupt practices within CSOs is acknowledged: at least 62% of responses recognise some level of corruption. However, more feel that they are occasional or very rare than think they are frequent or very frequent.

Table 10: Levels of corruption in CSOs

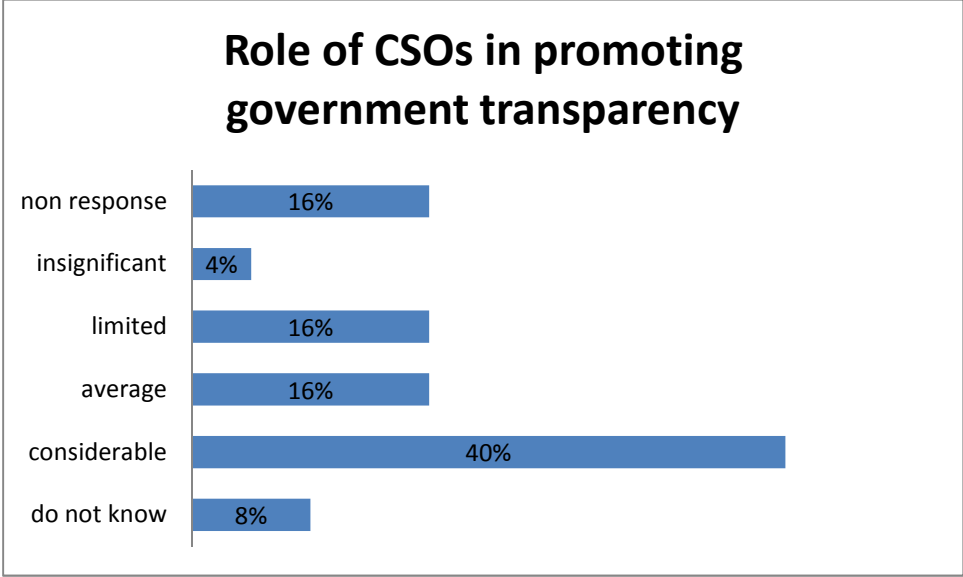
| | Very frequent | Frequent | Occasional | Very rare | N/A |
|--------------|---------------|----------|------------|-----------|-----|
| Total | 4% | 16% | 32% | 20% | 28% |

Having weighed the evidence, the AG assesses that there are occasional instances of corrupt behaviour within civil society, awarding a score of 2 out of 3. There are also question marks over the transparency of some CSOs: a lack of transparency enabled the government to accuse CSOs of abusing tax exemptions, which contributed to the government taking a unilateral decision to suspend agreements with many CSOs and foundations.

Role of CSOs in promoting government transparency

Assessments of the role of civil society in promoting transparency in government are quite positive: 56% believe civil society’s role here is considerable or average, compared to 20% who believe it is limited or insignificant.

Figure 2: The role of CSOs in promoting government transparency



On this basis, the AG concluded that Senegalese CSOs are becoming a positive agent in the promotion of transparency by government and the private sector, with CSO activities in this area enjoying broad support and public visibility. They accordingly scored this 3 out of 3.

4.3.3 Tolerance

This sub-dimension explores the balance between tolerant and intolerant forces within civil society, and the degree of involvement of civil society in promoting tolerance in society at large.

Promotion of tolerance by CSOs

There are many examples that can be offered of CSOs promoting tolerance in their work, particularly when seeking to overcome the effects of stigma on vulnerable groups, such as people living with HIV/AIDS. But these kinds of actions by CSOs cannot be seen as widespread: most respondents could offer either no examples or only one or two examples.

Table 11: Extent of CSOs’ promotion of tolerance within society

| | No answer | No | Only one or two examples | Some examples | Many examples | N/A |
|--------------|-----------|-----|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|-----|
| Total | 4% | 24% | 36% | 16% | 0% | 20% |
| | | | 52% | | | |

Opinions are mixed about whether CSOs believe have a significant role to play in promoting tolerance; while 36% of respondents believe they play a significant role, a matching 36% see this role as moderate to insignificant.

Table 12: Significance of CSOs’ role in promoting tolerance

| | No response | Insignificant | Limited | Moderate | Considerable | N/A |
|--------------|-------------|---------------|---------|----------|--------------|-----|
| Total | 4% | 12% | 16% | 80% | 36% | 24% |

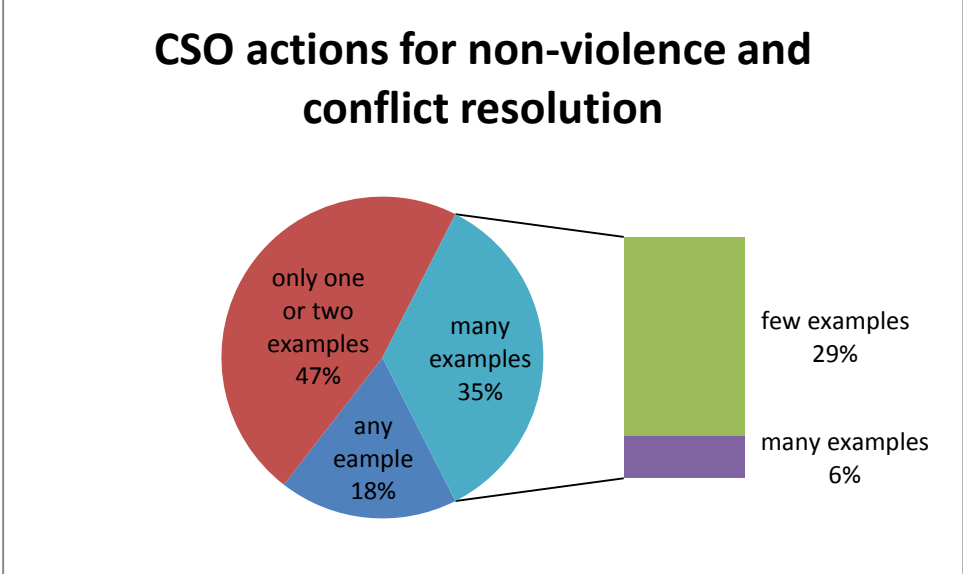
The AG determined that while CSOs undertake a range of initiatives in this area, there are gaps, and broad support and public visibility of such initiatives are lacking. They scored this 2 out of 3.

4.3.4 Non-violence

CSO actions to promote non-violence and peace

CSOs were asked about their knowledge of examples, over the previous year, of public campaigns, actions or programmes by CSOs to promote non-violence or the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Some examples of these exist in Senegal, most of them located in Casamance, in the southern region of Senegal, where there has been a civil conflict for 31 years.

Figure 3: Examples of CSO activities to promote non-violence and conflict resolution

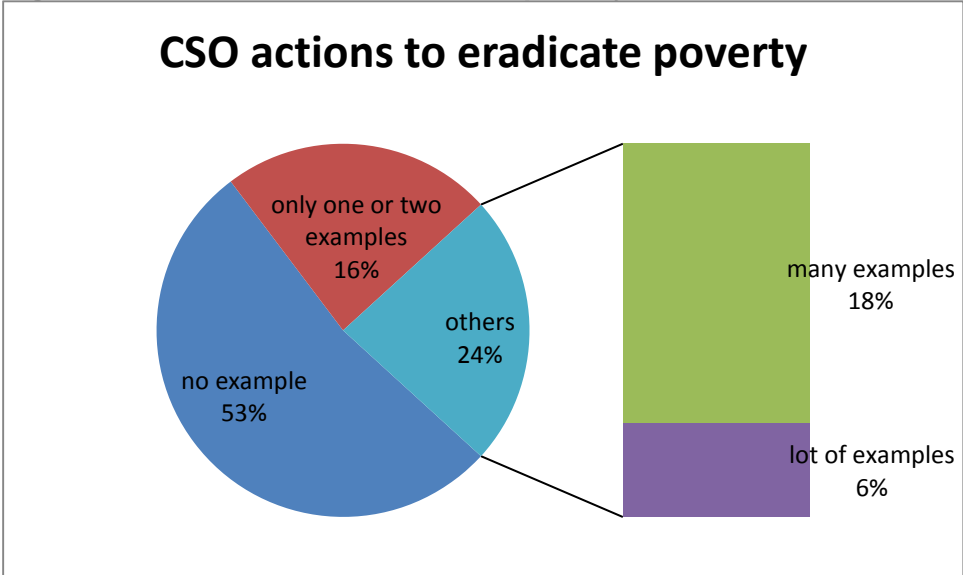


It was however assessed by the AG that these initiatives would benefit from being more valued and supported by governments and international actors. As such this was scored 2 out of 3.

4.3.5 Eradication of poverty

This sub-dimension examines the extent to which CSOs are involved in the fight against poverty and the promotion of policies for the poor, which can be taken as an important indicator of the values of CSOs and their commitment to improving citizens' lives.

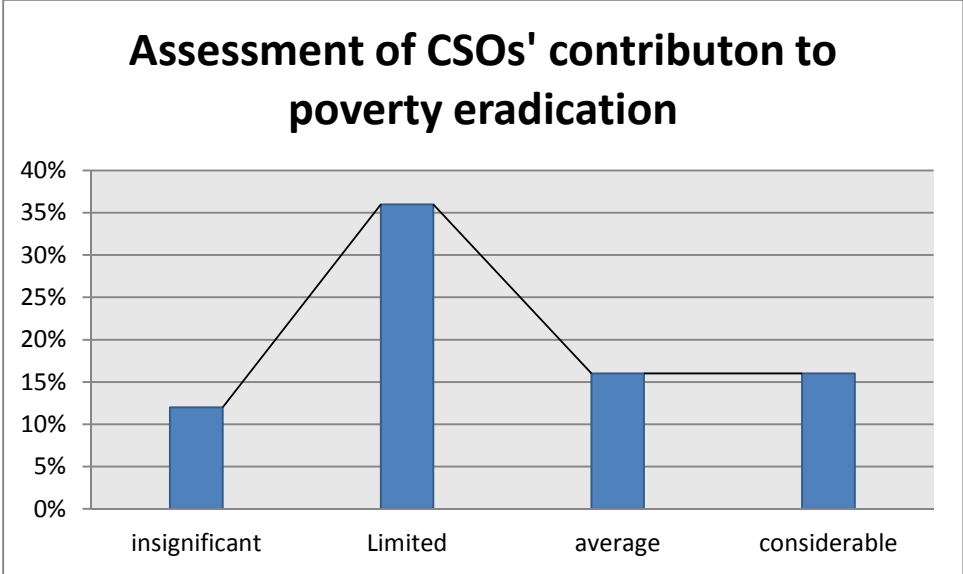
Figure 4: CSO initiatives to eradicate poverty



CSO initiatives offer a wide range of activities that contribute directly and indirectly to poverty reduction, but there are many CSOs that couldn't offer examples of activities, or identify the effect of initiatives on tackling poverty.

The contribution of CSOs to poverty reduction is positively assessed by some (32% say this is average or considerable), but there are many dissenting voices: 36% of responses see it as limited and 12% as insignificant.

Figure 5: Assessment of the contribution of CSOs to poverty eradication



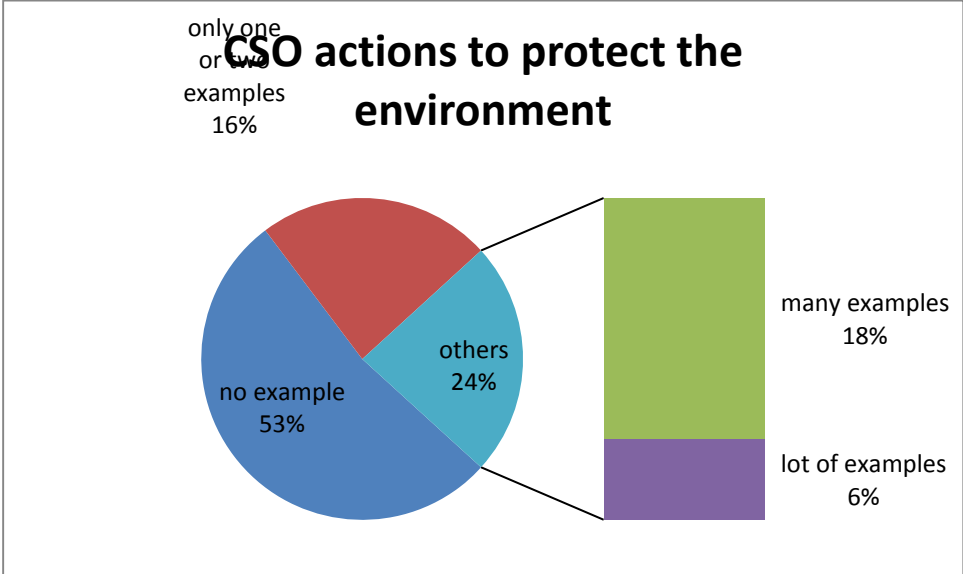
On this basis, the AG concluded that activity is limited and visibility is low, scoring this indicator 1 out of 3.

4.3.6 Environmental sustainability

This sub-dimension assesses the extent to which CSOs are actively engaged in promoting the protection of the environment.

A number of CSOs are working on environmental issues, particularly at the local level, or include the environment as a cross-cutting area in their programmes; however, most CSO respondents cannot give any, or only few examples of such efforts, indicating that the environment is still not a mainstream CSO issue.

Figure 6: CSO initiatives in environmental protection



Further, while only 12% of respondents believe CSOs have an insignificant role in protecting the environment, only 20% believe they play a considerable role. For most CSO representatives, 48%, this role is modest.

On this basis, the AG assessed that there are a number of CSO activities in this area, but there is not broad support or public visibility, scoring this indicator 2 out of 3.

4.4 Impact

4.4.1 Influence on public policy

CSOs’ impact on public policy was assessed. Influence on policy on three issues was examined: land, good governance and decentralisation

Table 13: Perceived influence of CSOs on public policies

| | No answer | Insignificant | Limited | Moderate | Significant | N/A |
|-------------------------|-----------|---------------|------------|----------|-------------|-----|
| Land | 4% | 16% | 28% | 28% | 8% | 16% |
| | | | 64% | | | |
| Good governance | 8% | 4% | 16% | 48% | 20% | 4% |
| | | | 84% | | | |
| Decentralisation | 4% | 12% | 48% | 16% | 0% | 24% |
| | | | 64% | | | |

Highest perceived influence is therefore on good governance policies, followed equally by decentralisation and land policies. However, assessment of significant is low: most respondents see limited to moderate level of impacts. On this basis, the AG assessed impact as average and scored the indicator at 2 out of 3.

4.4.2 Responsiveness to the public

The study also sought to assess the extent to which the policy positions and priorities of civil society reflect the actual demands of the population as a whole. This sub-dimension therefore considers both the effectiveness of CSO responses to priority social concerns, and the degree of public confidence in CSOs, which can be considered as an indicator of how responsive people feel CSOs are.

Effectiveness of responses of CSOs

In the community survey, people were asked whether they would assess CSOs as more or less effective than the state in the provision of services to vulnerable or marginalised groups, such as very poor people, people with disabilities, street children and people affected by the conflict in Casamance. The result is a large vote of confidence in CSOs compared to the state.

Table 14: CSO effectiveness compared to the state

| | No answer | CSOs | National agencies | No experience of either | N/A |
|--------------|-----------|------|-------------------|-------------------------|-----|
| Total | 3% | 49% | 9% | 15% | 24% |

Public trust in CSOs

Participants in the community survey were asked to state their trust levels in a range of public actors. Organisation types that have the highest levels of public trust are the armed forces (76.3% have high confidence) and religious organisations (65.0%). The police also have a good level of trust (45.3%). Compared to this, political parties are the most distrusted (60.5% have no confidence or low confidence) followed by trade unions (43.2%).

In terms of the media, more people trust non-TV media than distrust it, and confidence levels for TV are a little higher than this, with a slight advantage for public media versus private.

As for CSOs, the percentage of people who report high confidence, 46.4%, can be seen as encouraging, and when consolidated with the 24.0% reporting 'quite high' confidence, suggests a reasonable level of trust by 70.4% of respondents.

Table 15: Confidence in different public actors

| | No answer | High confidence | Quite high | Low | No confidence | N/A |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------------|------------|-------|---------------|--------|
| Armed forces | 0.8% | 76.3% | 10.2% | 9.4% | 1.2% | 2.1% |
| Religious organisations | 1.1% | 65.0% | 9.3% | 8.3% | 3.9% | 12.5% |
| CSOs | 1.6% | 46.4% | 24.0% | 13.8% | 5.2% | 9.0% |
| Police | 1.4% | 45.3% | 23.8% | 21.3% | 6.8% | 1.4% |
| Public TV | 0.6% | 33.4% | 28.9% | 29.3% | 6.3% | 1.5% |
| Private TV | 1.6% | 26.9% | 41.8% | 21.3% | 6.0% | 2.4% |
| Press (non-TV media) | 0.7% | 19.6% | 36.4% | 33.5% | 8.2% | 1.6% |
| Trade unions | 1.7% | 13.8% | 26.2% | 23.5% | 19.7% | 15.10% |
| Political parties | 1.2% | 10.1% | 25.1% | 36.0% | 24.5% | 3.1% |

5. Strengths and weaknesses of CSOs and Senegal

Based on AG discussions of the above analysis, the following key strengths and weaknesses of CSOs in Senegal can be identified.

5.1 Strengths

Expertise and reputation

CSOs have gradually developed capacity for analysis, design and implementation of programmes at the national level, and at the sub-national level on some topics.

Ability to lobby and influence

This expertise is now associated with a strong ability to influence actions on several national and international issues, such as trade, the fight against poverty, human rights and the pursuit of peace.

Impact on citizens' participation

CSOs have helped develop and strengthen the capacity of citizens to act, as could be seen in the example given earlier of CSO efforts on the 2012 elections.

Expanded scope

CSOs are offering a variety of programmes towards a variety of targets. This diversity should be seen as a strength, even though there may be imbalances about the distribution of activities.

5.2 Weaknesses

Weak institutional and professional capacity

One of the main challenges affecting CSOs is their weak institutional capacity, lack of sufficient appropriately qualified staff and limited coverage of all parts of the country. This is common for national CSOs, and particularly small CSOs. Only around a dozen large CSOs, some of them internationally linked, could be said to perform better than this. These limitations are exacerbated by the lack of a single umbrella organisation for CSOs, as oppose to groupings by affinity or theme.

Low internal democracy and limited transparency

Many CSOs, particularly small CSOs, have opaque financial management. This connects with that fact that most funding goes towards larger CSOs that are seen as organisationally more credible. The most significant challenge for CSOs is to establish a democratic culture and good internal governance. There are also challenges here of non-democratic selection of leaders, lengthy leadership terms and limited functionality of some leaders.

Lack of autonomy

The vast majority of CSOs depend on partners, both national and international, to fund their activities. As such their survival can be somewhat precarious. It is only recently that Senegalese CSOs have begun to have individual members and supporters to help fund their activities, and have initiatives to raise funds from individuals. This is the case for example with the Y'en a Marre movement, a group of Senegalese rappers and journalists, which began in January 2011, to protest against ineffective government and encourage young people to register vote. Through diverse diversification strategies such as the sales of t-shirts they have helped to finance their activities.

Civil society disconnection

There is also a need for more dialogue between different parts of civil society. The civil society landscape seems fast-changing. There has been a recent rise of new youth

movements, such as Y'en a Marre, and there are also new social networks, national level CSOs that focus on improved governance and transparency in the management of public affairs and local level citizens' mobilisations on quality of life issues, such as environmental pollution. But alongside these positive developments come challenges such as elite co-optation of CSOs, low levels of legitimacy and limited capacity. Some in CSOs fear that the rise of new social movements are coming at the expense of more traditional organisations, which may have become complacent as a result of receiving funding; the ability of new social movements to maintain their momentum is a further question.

Conflicts with political society

Some analysts question the ability of civil society leaders to maintain distance from party political positions. In they do not, they risk compromising notions of the neutrality and autonomy of civil society. Movements of civil society leaders into political positions have put at risk the distinctiveness of civil society. A related critique is that CSOs reproduce the governance styles, such as lack of transparency and accountability, of the state, and do not empower citizens but rather position themselves as brokers between funding sources and citizens.

6. Recommendations

Senegalese civil society should be strengthened through internal promotion of the core values of transparency, integrity and accountability. In practical terms this implies applying codes of conduct, publishing financial reports and involving CSO members in their organisations' major decision-making processes.

CSOs also need to become major partners in government public policy decisions. Several steps are needed to make progress here, starting with CSOs developing their capacities to hold proactive dialogue with the government, rather than simply offering criticisms. CSOs also need to be able to improve their ability to prove their legitimacy, deriving from clear mandates of their members, and their ability to tap into a social constituency. Technical expertise in CSOs' particular subject areas also needs to be strengthened.

CSOs need to be more involved in, and model internally, the fight for good governance and against corruption. CSOs need to become more effective in promoting equitable governance, transparency and participatory democracy. CSOs must strike a balance between being political actors and not seeking political power, and should remain equidistant from all political parties.

CSOs also need to ensure that they are adopting and promoting participatory approaches, consistent with their role to educate, inform, engage in advocacy and mobilise people.

CSOs also need to adopt a culture of evaluation, which means that CSOs need to be able to accept constructive criticism and take responsibility for their mistakes. Evaluation must look beyond indicators of outputs to look for impacts on the lives of citizens and institutions, and on strengthening democracy. In this regard peer reviews offer an innovative solution that could be encouraged. CSO's monitoring and evaluation capacities should be strengthened.

CSOs also need to apply appropriate and modern methods for managing and sharing information about their activities and performance, for example by using social reporting tools, in order to set an example for state institutions and private companies.

CSOs need to be more inclusive towards women, young people, rural populations and vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities and street children. Inclusivity must be systematically pursued. Greater inclusion also helps to strengthen CSOs' understandings of different needs and cultural sensitivities, and to do work that does not exacerbate social tensions, but rather that works with the power of socio-cultural and religious values.

Different CSOs need to improve their collaboration and search for synergies. There also needs to be more emphasis on collaboration of different actors in social mobilisation, such as between national level CSOs, CBOs and trade unions, and the need for increased financial resources to support this should be addressed. Dialogue between the state, the private sector, CSOs and citizens must be grown and made permanent in order to deepen democracy.

7. Conclusion and next steps

Forum Civil intends to disseminate the national assessment report amongst civil society, and with the government and donors. The findings are expected to create opportunities for dialogue on the reality, achievements and challenges of Senegalese CSO. The findings will also inform discussion and consultation in preparation for the convening of a national conference of civil society.

Emphasis will be given to making progress on some of the recommendations that can be addressed by civil society internally, such as moving towards consensus on a code of conduct for Senegalese CSOs.

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