World Alliance for Citizen Participation

e-CIVICUS

A Free Weekly Electronic Newsletter Promoting Civic Existence, Expression & Engagement

Please send contributions, comments and questions to editor@civicus.org.

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CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation

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ABOUT e-CIVICUS
The CIVICUS weekly electronic publication is keeping tens of thousands of people informed of the developments taking place in civil society, the factors that are affecting them and the impact they are having on creating an informed and knowledgeable civil society.

e-CIVICUS WELCOMES CONTRIBUTIONS
e-CIVICUS offers a useful channel through which you and your organisation can share your news, publicise your events and articulate the issues you face. Please send us your contributions by Monday for publication in the coming week to editor@civicus.org. All contributions must focus on civil society issues or have a civil society angle. To read

FROM THE DESK OF CIVICUS' SECRETARY GENERAL



Dear friends and colleagues,

The greatest onus for catalysing collective civil society action in today's context lies with those of us who connect the dots – national, regional and global alliances that cut across thematic, geographical or sectoral boundaries.

Join the Dots

If we have learned anything from the implosion of the global financial system and the resultant economic meltdown, it is this: the peoples of the world are even more connected than anyone, including philosophers, ever imagined; technocrats across disciplines do not understand the linkages within the systems they have created and understand the linkages across various systems even less; the decision to act, or not, to save one entity, be it a bank or a species, can turn a ripple into a tsunami; our leaders, with a few exceptions, are still focused on devising band-aid solutions addressing the symptoms of the problem, rather than admitting that the structures are fundamentally flawed.

It is with a great deal of regret and disappointment that CIVICUS announces a postponement in our next World Assembly to 2010. We are keenly aware that the need for such a global civil society convening is more intense than ever and have explored every avenue to prevent this postponement. Regrettably, funding uncertainties and the shrinking capacity to fund travel to such events, makes the decision unavoidable. We will do our very best through 2009 to find other ways of building solidarity, sharing information and learning and evolving joint solutions to the pressing problems we face as a sector. Your input on possible ways in which we might achieve this is more than welcome. Please send your comments to worldassembly@civicus.org. And, of course, we look forward to ensuring the World Assembly of 2010 exceeds your expectations.

With gratitude, faith and solidarity,

Ingrid Srinath

Read more...

CIVICUS celebrates Human Rights Day

CIVICUS is celebrating Human Rights Day in South Africa on 26 March 2009 by hosting a networking meeting with its local members. The meeting will provide an opportunity for members to connect with

the contribution guidelines, click here.

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Civil Society Watch Monthly Bulletin
The CIVICUS e-newsletter Civil Society Watch Monthly Bulletin is an action-oriented newsletter distributed to over 7,400 people, featuring insightful interviews, updates on threats to civil society, and analyses of current situations. Read more at www.civicus.org.

each other and learn about how we are all working together to build a more just world. The event serves as a first step in improving CIVICUS' engagement with its members around the world.

Town and Country – the bitter divide

By Mukat Singh, Founder, Amarpurkashi Development Project, U.P., India

We who live in the villages, both farmers and labourers, are on our own in the world. We make up over 80% of the population in the state of Uttar Pradesh while in the country as a whole, we comprise 70%. Thus seven out of every ten people in India live in the villages and uncultivated countryside. The urban population consists of a mere 30% of the total population. This includes one-third who live on the streets and in shanty towns. They come initially from the villages where they still have their roots. They migrate to urban centers in the search of a livelihood. *To read more, click here*.

Lesotho: Women farmers get mobile phone know-how

Source: IRIN News

Access to mobiles phones has transformed the lives of rural women farmers boosting income and expanding knowledge, a pilot study in Lesotho has found. Three years ago, Evodia Matobo, then 62, a small-scale poultry farmer in Lesotho's rural lowlands, was stacking plastic containers to feed her chickens. Now she talks about "feeders, agricultural shows, workshops, experts." *For details, click here*.

South Asia contributions from members continue to be featured in this issue…

Readers will notice the continuing coverage of South Asia in this week's edition of e-CIVICUS. This is due to the fact that we received an overwhelming response from members and other readers to our request for contributions to the first-ever regional focus issue, which focussed on South Asia last week. The editors of e-CIVICUS thank all contributors and hope for continued contributions for future issues. If you have comments on any of the stories, do send a Letter to the Editor.

Letters to the Editor

e-CIVICUS will now publish selected correspondence from its readers - and visitors to the CIVICUS website - in a new section called 'Letters to the Editor'. Please keep such letters short (preferred length of 50 to 200 words) and mention 'Letters to the Editor' in your message or heading. These may be sent to editor@civicus.org

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CIVICUS Poll Question

This week's question:

CIVICUS' postponement of the CIVICUS World Assembly 2009 is understandable due to the financial crisis' impact on civil society organisations...

a. Yes. It would have been hard for many participants to make it to the event this year
b. No. The show must go on
c. Wish it had been possible, but understand the problem

To answer the question, *click here*.

Previous question: Civil society can make South Asia a safer region.

a. Yes. Civil society is already making an impact here
b. No way! The region requires divine intervention
c. We just can't predict what's going to happen here!

CIVICUS channel on YouTube: 'Time 2 Act' Go to YouTube, *click here*.

CIVICUS launches its 1 for 1 membership campaign
Are you one of the missing 85?
One CIVICUS member for every UN member state, that's the goal of CIVICUS' 1 for 1 Membership campaign, click here.

Results: a. - 71.4%, b. - 14.3%, c. - 14.3%

JOIN e-CIVICUS - BECOME A CONTRIBUTOR

e-CIVICUS keeps tens of thousands of people and organisations informed of the many developments taking place in civil society around the world. This e-publication seeks to encourage and amplify the voices of those struggling for a more just world. As a subscriber, you know the value e-CIVICUS can bring to your work.

Why don't you suggest to your friends to register for a free subscription? They can send an email to subscriptions@civicus.org or fill out the subscription form here. Alternatively, please forward their email addresses to us and we'll contact them on your behalf. Please send your contributions by Monday every week to editor@civicus.org. All contributions must be focused on civil society issues or have a civil society angle.

CIVIL SOCIETY NEWS

CIVICUS reacts to US withdrawal from the Durban Review negotiations

CIVICUS Press Release, 19 March 2009

CIVICUS, together with its members and partners around the world, is eagerly observing the first steps taken on the global stage by the new US administration. We were particularly encouraged by President Obama's recent address to a Joint Session of the United States Congress, when he said: "In words and deeds, we are showing the world that a new era of engagement has begun. For we know that America cannot meet the threats of this century alone. We cannot shun the negotiating table, nor ignore the foes or forces that could do us harm. We are instead called to move forward with the sense of confidence and candour that serious times demand." *For details, click here*.

Tackling caste discrimination in Bangladesh

By Bethan Cobley (Asia Regional Co-ordinator), One World Action

One World Action's work over the last two decades has focussed on supporting citizens excluded by gender, poverty, disability, HIV status and ethnicity to participate fully in decision-making and to hold their governments to account. In South Asia we are supporting people who are excluded by caste. *For details, click here*.

Afghanistan: update on the humanitarian situation

By Eng Sayed Rahim Sattar, APWO

Due to the present conflict in Afghanistan daily life of the people is getting worse day by day. The security situation in Afghanistan has worsened over the last year and a half, and the armed conflict has remained intense in 2008. Regular fighting between armed groups and national and international forces has continued in more than half of the country. Even in provinces not affected by open combat, roadside bombs and suicide bombings are regular occurrences. Early this year, fighting in the west of Afghanistan became as intense as it had been in the south, south-east and east. Hostilities continue to claim the lives of Afghans, international aid workers and foreigners. Access to remote areas remains a major problem in most parts of the country. *For details, click here*.

Nurturing active citizenship among youth in india

By Jean Manney, Program Associate, Innovations in Civic Participation (ICP)

South Asia is home to one of the largest and fastest-growing youth populations on the planet, with 33% of India's population between 15 and 35 years old. The challenge is to ensure that this huge cohort becomes a vibrant, constructive force that can address social issues and create a more just, equitable and peaceful world. How do we build the capacities of young people to become leaders for

social change, improve their communities and impact issues of social justice? *For details, click here*.

Independent judiciary in Pakistan: a hard-won victory
By Irfan Mufti, GCAP Campaign Manager
History is made. It is a true moment of jubilation in Pakistan as after two-years of peaceful but hard and consistent protest movement finally got victory on 16th March 09, when bowed down to popular will of the people of Pakistan and agreed to reinstate the deposed chief justice Iftikhar Chaudhry, along with nearly 59 judges, sacked by General Pervez Musharraf two years ago. *For details, click here*.

Tajikistan: new Religion Law will worsen the situation with religious liberties
By Mushfig Bayram, Forum 18 News Service
Tajikistan's restrictive new Religion Law, approved by both Houses of Parliament this month, could go to President Emomali Rahmon for signature within days, Akbar Turajonzoda, an independent member of Parliament's Upper House, told Forum 18 News Service. "This Law contradicts Tajikistan's Constitution and international norms," he insisted. The new Law favours the Hanafi school of Islam over other schools, restricts the number of mosques, requires the state to name all imams, restricts religious education, imposes compulsory censorship of religious literature and imposes wide-ranging state control over the activity of all religious associations. The Law is undisclosed to the public, and the adoption process does not allow for any public debate. *For details, click here*.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Towards Sustainable Outsourcing: A responsible competitiveness agenda for ITES
Source: AccountAbility
Serious economic downturn is causing business to maximise value creation along their supply chains and harness IT Enabled Services (ITES), those services that can be provided remotely though cables, phones and computers. So far, these changes in the global workforce have failed to contribute to sustainable development. A new study by AccountAbility and the International Institute for Sustainable Development - with support from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation – identifies that there are real opportunities for this sector to embed responsible competitiveness. Towards Sustainable Outsourcing, sets an agenda to embed responsible competitiveness in the ITES sector. *For details, click here*.

GET INVOLVED!

Put People First march
Source: Charlie Kronick, Greenpeace UK
Please come along and add your voice to the Put People First march for jobs, justice and the climate in London on Saturday 28th March. Global leaders are meeting in London on 2nd April for the G20 meeting, and we want them to Put People First and focus on jobs, justice and the climate. Greenpeace is one of the 50 organisations supporting the march, which is calling for - among other things - a green new deal to help rebuild the economy and create green jobs. *For details, click here*.

Read more...

GLOBAL INSTITUTIONS UPDATE

UN expert urges greater help for 26 million displaced people worldwide
Source: UN News Centre
Over 26 million people have been uprooted by natural disasters and conflicts worldwide, a United Nations independent expert said today, urging bolstered efforts to address urgent displacement crises. "There is an urgent need for the international community to pay more attention to some of the worst crisis situations," Walter Kälin, the Secretary-General's Special Representative on the human rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs), said, citing Somalia, Sri Lanka and Sudan as being among the worst-affected countries. *For details, click here*.

World Bank approves USD 5 million in additional financing for Albania's social services delivery project
Source: World Bank
The World Bank Board of Directors today approved a loan of USD 5 million in additional financing to the Republic of Albania for the Social Services Delivery Project. The additional financing will complement the original credit of US$10 million, and will be used for scaling-up current project activities related to the administrative reform of the Albanian pension system. *For details, click here*.

G-20 asks IMF to track, assess global crisis response
Source: International Monetary Fund
Ministers from leading industrialised and emerging market economies asked the IMF to assess the policy responses taken so far by governments and central banks to combat the world economic crisis and backed a substantial boost in the Fund's lendable resources. *For details, click here*.

Read more...

CLIMATE JUSTICE

UN Secretary-General calls on wealthy nations to adopt "green" stimulus packages
Source: CLIMATE-L.ORG
UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has explained that he will attend the G20 Summit in April in London, UK, where he will remind leaders of the developed world of the need to fulfill their promises to the most vulnerable people and for their stimulus packages to be "green" in order to help combat climate change by including investments in clean energy, renewable energy and energy efficiency. *For details, click here*.

UN: Financial crisis puts pressure on world's forests
Source: Environmental News Service (ENS)
The global economic turmoil has resulted in reduced demand for wood, shrinking investments in forest industries and forest management, finds the United Nations "State of the World's Forests" report released Monday. Issued by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization once every two years, the report expresses concern that the economic downturn could lead governments to water down ambitious green targets or defer key policy decisions related to climate change mitigation and adaptation as they focus on bringing in funds. *For details, click here*.

More local firms starting to seek advice on climate change issues
Source: Engineering News
The need for business and industry to take cognisance of climate change and prepare to operate in a carbon-constrained world was vital, and if correctly understood and embraced, could provide companies with a competitive advantage. *For details, click here*.

Read more…

PROFILES

DONOR: Free Voice

The foundation, Free Voice was established on 25 August, 1986 under the name SCO /CAF (SCO means: Stichting Communicatie Ontwikkelings-samenwerking; CAF means: Communication Assistance Foundation). Free Voice strives for independent and multiform media and balanced and reliable journalistic press freedom in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and Eastern Europe. Applicants for financial support must amongst other requirements be media organisations with programmmes that would add value to the existing media landscape, an initiative that contributes to strengthening civil society, have experience, be politically independent and sustainable. *For details, click here*.

MEMBER: PDHRE (Peoples Movement for human rights)

Since 1989, PDHRE (Peoples Movement for human rights), an international service organisation, has addressed the need of people to know and own human rights (HR) as relevant to their struggles and daily concerns. Through learning women and men re-imagine their lives, discover their own power, participating in defining the destiny of their community. Guided by the overarching HR framework they work to internalize the praxis of HR, to achieve economic and social justice with a gender perspective. Assuming social responsibility, people move away from humiliation and charity to belong in community in dignity with others. The results are overwhelming. *For details, click here*.

Read more profiles...

BOOKS, REPORTS & RESOURCES

Sixty-Third UN General Assembly scorecard: Achievements mark the 60th anniversary of the UDHR

By Dokhi Fassihian, Executive Director, Democracy Coalition Project

Each year, the Democracy Coalition Project charts the positions of governments on key human rights proposals considered at the UN General Assembly. The reports are designed to assist human rights advocates and governments improve the work of the United Nations in promoting and protecting human rights. This year, DCP tracked government positions on resolutions on the moratorium on the use of the death penalty, extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions, combating defamation of religions, and the human rights situations in Myanmar, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), and Iran. *For details, click here.*

CONFERENCES & EVENTS

G20 Summit

United Nations headquarters in London, 2 April 2009

In a sign of shifting power relations in international politics, the G20 group of rich nations will meet in London on 2 April 2009 as a follow-up to their November 2008 meeting in Washington DC. Their discussions will revolve around the current economic crisis and what to do about it. *For details, click here*.

Calderon's Stimulus: The economic and social implications for working families in Mexico

Monday, March 23, 2009, 10:30am Economic Policy Institute, Washington DC

Two Views: Dr. Carlos Salas, Professor El Colegio de Tlaxcala, Coordinator Mexican Institute of

Labor Studies and Dr. Antonio Ortiz, Head of Economic Affairs Section, Mexican Embassy. For additional information about this event, please call +1 202-533-2555. For registration support, contact events@epi.org.

Read more...

WORKSHOPS AND COURSES

Writing opinion pieces for publications
Institute for the Advancement of Journalism (IAJ) from 23-24 March 2009 in Johannesburg
Learn to write an opinion piece that grabs readers and makes them want to read on, even if it's not their topic. This 2-day workshop will show you how to lead your reader from point to point using anecdotes and evidence to reinforce your logical argument. Come along and acquire techniques that will move you away from that pedantic expression, into a lively style that respects tone. *For details, click here*.

CALL FOR PAPERS, SUBMISSIONS, SURVEYS & NOMINATIONS

Human rights and citizenship education
Source: International Centre for Education for Democratic Citizenship (ICEDC)
The International Centre for Education for Democratic Citizenship invites you to contribute to its conference: Human Rights and Citizenship Education. This conference is the third to be held under the auspices of the International Centre for Education for Democratic Citizenship, a joint centre of Birkbeck College and the Institute of Education, both of the University of London. It will bring together national and international researchers, policy makers and education professionals from a variety of backgrounds and disciplines. *For details, click here*.

Read more...

APPOINTMENTS

This week, new civil society job openings have been added to the CIVICUS website. Please click here.
Should you wish to publish a **New Vacancy**, please click on Add job. Please add an expiry date for applications.

JOBS OF THE WEEK

Programme Officer
Application Deadline: 27 March 2009
CIVICUS Civil Society Index
Location: Johannesburg, South Africa
For details, click here.

The world's largest anti poverty alliance, the Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP), is seeking to recruit three full-time positions at its Global Secretariat.

GCAP Campaign Director
For details, click here.

GCAP Mobilisation Coordinator
For details, click here.

GCAP Global Secretariat Assistant
For details, click here.

These unique and challenging roles require dynamism and the flexibility to work within a diverse global anti-poverty alliance. The successful candidates can be located anywhere that enables them to work in multiple time zones using Skype, e mail and telephone to stay in touch.

See www.whiteband.org/about-gcap/jobs for full job descriptions. Interested candidates should send their CV and a covering note describing their suitability for the position to: rajiv@whiteband.org

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CONTACT e-CIVICUS

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We value your comments and suggestions. Please send these to the Editorial Team at editor@civicus.org.

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