



28 August 2009
Edition No: 453

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Poll question

This week's question: To what extent are your work and policies based on participation of all involved and affected by them?

- a. Very
- b. Only internally
- c. Only externally
- d. More on Paper than in Practice
- e. Not at all

To answer the question, [click here](#)

Previous question: Considering the context for civil society right now, the [CIVICUS Board meeting](#) is focussing on:

- a. All the relevant issues
- b. Some of the relevant issues
- c. None of the relevant issues

Results: a. - 76.5%, b. - 17.6%, c. - 5.9%

Get involved

Witness for Kazakh human rights defender Evgeny Zhovtis

Source: International Committee for Observation of the Law

The International Committee for Observation of the Law calls out to the world community to witness for Kazakh human rights defender Evgeny Zhovtis. For details, [click here](#).

Greenpeace Living Guide tips for green living

Source: Greenpeace

The Greenpeace Living Guide offers real solutions for environmental living at home, at work and in your community. It also shows how each one of us can get political and be an everyday activist - taking on the root causes of environmental issues around the world. In the spirit of The Greenpeace Living Guide, we post some timely green tips here each month. For details, [click here](#).

We Welcome



From the Desk of the Secretary General

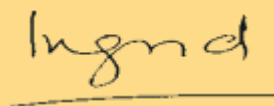
CIVICUS condemns repression of democratic freedom in Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan must surely be one of the most oppressive countries in the world. The enjoyment of fundamental freedom is virtually non-existent in Turkmenistan. Independent human rights groups are forced to work clandestinely under grave risk. Any criticism of official policies is met with heavy reprisals including arbitrary detention, torture and motivated prosecutions. The government's blanket bans on information and extreme levels of opaque governance are ignored by some 'western' democracies - who are weakening their stance on the protection of human rights in the country. This is in large measure due to Turkmenistan's vast hydrocarbon reserves.

We strongly believe that the international community must work with the Government of Turkmenistan to open space for democratic reform and recognise the role of civil society in building a just nation that respects the freedoms of its people. In a press release issued by CIVICUS this week, we urged the international community to adopt a uniform diplomatic policy against totalitarian regimes that oppress their people. Geopolitical economic concerns must not be allowed to subsume extreme and widespread human rights violations in Turkmenistan. Given Turkmenistan's appalling human rights record, investment in the country's resources must be linked to concrete steps towards democratic reform.

To read CIVICUS' Press Release, [click here](#).

With faith, gratitude and solidarity,



Special Issue on the second World Democracy Day on 15 September

We would like to invite you to contribute to a special edition of e-CIVICUS on the second World Democracy Day on 15 September.

Commemorating the adoption of the Universal Declaration on Democracy by the Inter-Parliamentary Union in 1997, and also marking the twentieth anniversary of the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, the UN General Assembly adopted 15 September 2008 as the first World Democracy Day. This will be an annual event dedicated to 'stressing the continuing need to promote democratisation, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms'.

CIVICUS will dedicate a full issue of e-CIVICUS to the World Democracy Day. We are very pleased to invite you to contribute to this issue and welcome contributions on:

- any democracy-related topic written from a civil society angle or
- addressing the role of civil society in democratisation, whether it is:
 - an opinion article
 - an event announcement or
 - a news story on an initiative that your organisation is undertaking to promote democratisation.

The issue will be published on 14 September, which means that contributions will be due on 10 September. Please forward your contributions to editor@civicus.org.

News in brief

France to roll out EU welcome for Turkmen chief

Source: EUobserver.com

The president of Turkmenistan is likely to make a state visit to France in November amid EU efforts to build relations with one of the world's most closed regimes. "Both sides have accepted in principle. We are now working around the hypothesis of November, but it is still subject to change," a source close to

Contributions

e-CIVICUS is 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. To read the contribution guidelines, [click here](#).

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Events

III Group Relations Conference on "Exploring and managing differences in groups and organisations" 31 August - 5 September 2009

Group Relations Conferences are temporary educational institutions for learning through direct experience. They are designed to provide a variety of opportunities for members to exercise leadership and authority in here and now situations, unravel and deal with the problems and resistances encountered in doing this, and manage themselves in roles. To register, [click here](#). For more details, [click here](#).

"Civil Voices" Festival

25 - 27 September, Küçükçiftlik Park, Istanbul-Turkey

"Civil Voices" Festival, organised by the Civil Society Development Center (STGM), will host various grassroots and local civil society organisations from Turkey and EU member/candidate countries between 25 and 27 September in Istanbul, Turkey. The festival is being organised under the "Supporting Civil Society Development and Dialogue in Turkey Project" supported by the European Union. To register, [click here](#). For details, [click here](#).

Book Reviews

Turkmeniscam

Source: [Nowtoronto.com](#)

In this slim book, Silverstein describes going undercover to get the goods on two of Washington's most prominent lobbying firms. Silverstein, the Washington editor of Harper's Magazine, created a phony company that, he told the firms, was trying to clean up the image of Turkmenistan and make it more palatable to U.S. lawmakers. For details, [click here](#).

For more book reviews, [click here](#)

Letters to the Editor

Dear colleagues,

Africans have had human rights within their communal rights for centuries. It is my experience in Nigeria that presenting human rights as part of their own heritage is a powerful stimulus for personal development in students. I think human rights taught in this spirit - the spirit to personally take responsibility to make sure our own actions uphold human dignity - is far more powerful and useful than teaching or trying to teach about human rights. There may be a need to reconfigure traditional rights into a more modern context, to be sure - but that is far easier than imposing human rights education from the international context. According to "Traditional African Institutions" by George Ayittey, many of these human rights are identical to the international version. Certainly, human rights have been around in many cultures around the world as well and these cultures also converted some of their traditional human rights into a modern context. Why not support the same for Africa?

Stephanie Tansey

Earth Charter Communities, United States

the dossier told EUobserver. For details, [click here](#).

New threats aggravate Africa's water crisis

Source: [Inter Press Service News Agency](#)

The widespread water scarcity in the African continent, impacting on the lives of nearly 300 million people, may be aggravated further by several new threats, including climate change, transboundary disputes and the negative fallout from military conflicts. Par Granstedt, general secretary of the Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa (AWEPA), points out that the African continent has contributed least to the emissions causing climate change, but is hardest hit by their effects. For details, [click here](#).

Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program announces new grants and down and dirty shorts photos

Source: [Binside TV](#)

The Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program announced documentary film projects to receive grant awards and creative support from the Sundance Documentary Fund. A record number of proposal submissions was received and considered for this round, totalling close to 900 applicants working in 61 countries. 15 feature documentary films in either development or in production/post-production will receive awards. The funded projects include nine U.S. stories, eight female directors and five first-time feature directors. For details, [click here](#).

ZAMBIA: NGOs fear law will hobble their activities

Source: [IRIN News](#)

Zambian civil society fears the imminent introduction of legislation designed to regulate non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that may compromise their independence and even result in a clampdown on their operations. The 2009 NGO Bill, passed by parliament last week and now awaiting the signature of President Rupiah Banda to become law, calls for "the registration and co-ordination of NGOs, to regulate the work, and the area of work, of NGOs operating in Zambia." For details, [click here](#).

Norwegian UN diplomat slams Ban Ki-moon

Source: [Foreign Policy](#)

Norway's second-in-command at the United Nations in New York wrote a confidential internal report for her country's foreign ministry, which is a major UN funder. In a memo, she castigates Ban for his lack of vision and leadership. She describes him as "spineless," a "passive observer" to the Myanmar situation, his work as "fruitless," and questions the damage he's done. For details, [click here](#).



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](#).

CIVICUS Member profile

Social and Technical Association for Afghanistan Rehabilitation (STAAR)

STAAR was established in 1993 and since that time it has completed a substantial number of community projects in Afghanistan focusing on uplifting urban and rural communities by actively involving the local target communities in the social and physical development process. Our Mission is to provide developmental and humanitarian assistance to the communities all over the country and simultaneously works for the rehabilitation of Afghanistan within its financial capacity. Financial capacity would mean funds that STAAR could have raised from different donors and other resources that STAAR may have in hand. We provide technical guidance and assistance in the physical development and rehabilitation processes. We also implement and facilitate participatory projects in the communities. STAAR Works with Afghans on human rights and sensitising the communities on human rights with a gender touch by applying various awareness raising techniques. Our achievements include interventions in Education, Health, Skill Enhancement, Water Supply and Sanitation (WATSAN), Agriculture, Food Supply in emergencies or deserving cases, Building Infrastructure and provision of services. For more information please contact Abdul Ghani Shagiwal at staar_kabul@yahoo.com.

Resources

Evaluation report of the UNIFEM programme facilitating CEDAW implementation in Southeast Asia (CEDAW SEAP) (2009)

Source: [UNIFEM](#)

The evaluation of the programme "Facilitating the Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in Southeast Asia" represents the first corporate evaluation completed by UNIFEM within the framework of the organisation's Strategic Plan 2008-2011. It assesses the effectiveness, relevance and sustainability of the programme, and provides recommendations on how it can be further implemented to effectively build on partnerships, experiences and achievements, provide support for ongoing learning and enhance the use of results-based management. For details, [click here](#).

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<http://www.youtube.com/user/civicusworldalliance>

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.

Director of Operations

Application Deadline: 11 September 2009

CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation

Location: Johannesburg, South Africa

For details, [click here](#).

Coordinator, Prison Reforms Programme

Application Deadline: 31 August 2009

Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)

Location: New Delhi, India

For details, [click here](#).

Regional Director, East Africa

Application Deadline: 7 September 2009

The ELMA Philanthropies Services (U.S.) Inc.

Location: Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

For details, [click here](#).

Senior Researcher - Security Sector Governance in Africa

Application Deadline: 15 September 2009

Institute for Security Studies (ISS)

Location: Pretoria, South Africa

For details, [click here](#).

Junior Researcher - Security Sector Governance in Africa

Application Deadline: 15 September 2009

Institute for Security Studies (ISS)

Location: Pretoria, South Africa

For details, [click here](#).

Impact Planning, Assessment and Learning (IPAL)

Source: Keystone

Keystone's tools for Impact Planning, Assessment and Learning (IPAL) help social purpose organisations to plan, monitor, evaluate and communicate their work in a way that is deeply sensitive to the complexity of social systems and change processes. IPAL focuses on the contribution organisations make to achieving sustainable developmental outcomes in complex systems. It fosters accountable learning relationships among key constituents of change processes (funders, implementers and those most affected) in which each learns to contribute optimally to incremental and sustainable impact over time. For details, [click here](#).

Political violence report

Source: Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum

The Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum issued the latest Monthly Political Violence Report for the month of June 2009. The report notes that the month of June saw the levels of organised violence being sustained with little indication the Government of National Unity (GNU) was committed to ending human rights violations in the country. It notes that disregard for the rule of law, corruption, intimidation, abuse of political office and the militarisation of both public and private institutions continue to dog Zimbabwe and stifle any meaningful economic recovery. For details, [click here](#).

Opportunities

Call for Creative Photography

Deadline: 10 September, 2009

ICVolunteers invites photographers to share their view and perspective on the topic: "Diverse Perspectives on the Environment, Citizenship and Volunteering". ICVolunteers considers sustainable development and its ecological dimension a powerful engine for development and wellbeing for all. Climate change is a real threat. It is time to act. For details, [click here](#).

Call for proposals: "Safer Cities for Women and Girls"

Deadline: 4 September 2009

UNIFEM SARO is seeking the services of an organisation, preferably from the Western Cape, South Africa, to implement the activities related to their global programme "Safer Cities for Women and Girls" in the Northern and Western Cape Provinces. Download the [Terms of Reference](#) as well as [Proposal Guidelines](#) for more information. The Institutional Assessment Form should be filled in and sent back to them when submitting the technical and financial proposal (budget). To download the Institutional Assessment Form, [click here](#).

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