



Press Release

Civil society breaks through silos to tackle global issues: 10th CIVICUS World Assembly

Montreal. 12 September 2011. Civil society is starting to make progress in breaking down silos between different sectors and across themes, regions and languages to improve their collective work towards building a more just world. This is the main result of this weekend's 10th edition of the CIVICUS World Assembly, held from 10-12 September in Montreal and attended by over 800 delegates.

“During the Assembly we have seen a convergence of themes - from climate justice to development effectiveness to democratic space - with different movements from around the world coming together towards a common dialogue of sustainable, inclusive development based on human rights,” said Ingrid Srinath, Secretary General of CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation. “As civil society faces both external and internal threats to its very existence, there is a growing appetite for collaboration to advance many agendas from Rio+20 to the Beyond 2015 post-MDG agenda.”

While the 2010 CIVICUS World Assembly highlighted the external clampdown on civil society, primarily from governments, the 2011 event witnessed an increasing recognition of the internal threats to civil society, particularly formal civil society organisations who are disconnected from the rising wave of informal citizen participation around the world.

“World Assembly delegates recognise the seriousness of the dissatisfaction among citizens across the globe who are making their voices heard any way they can, which has provided real motivation to find new ideas and new solutions” said Srinath.

The Montreal event advanced discussions on development effectiveness, reflected on the Arab Spring and underscored the role of the Francophonie in global decision-making. It also showcased the initiatives of Quebec civil society organisations while providing them the opportunity to learn and network with international organisations and institutions such as Greenpeace, Oxfam, the World Bank and the United Nations Development programme.

“We succeeded in creating a forum where participants were able to rub shoulders with a former minister in the Nelson Mandela government, representatives of international institutions and major civil society organisations as well as companies like Google and Microsoft,” said Michel Venne, CEO and founder of the Institut du Nouveau Monde. “Bringing all these actors together around key challenges that society faces is an outstanding accomplishment.”

Under the theme 'Civil Society and Global Decision-Making: Doing it Better', the CIVICUS World Assembly focused on four tracks: climate justice, development effectiveness, civil society and democratic space and connecting people through technology.

"Each track had separate activities but the main messages across the themes was that these issues are inter-related and that it is only by working across themes, regions and sectors that they will be tackled effectively," said Venne.

The activity reports for the entire assembly are available online at www.civicusassembly.org. You can also access information from the event from the following sources:

Website: www.civicusassembly.org

Blog: <http://citizenshift.org/blogs/civicus/>

Live stream: <http://civicusassembly.org/CivicusLive.php>

Twitter: [@CIVICUSalliance](https://twitter.com/CIVICUSalliance) #civWA

Facebook: www.facebook.com/CIVICUS

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About CIVICUS

CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation has worked for nearly two decades to strengthen citizen action and civil society throughout the world, especially in areas where participatory democracy and citizens' freedom of association are threatened. CIVICUS has a vision of a global community of active, engaged citizens committed to the creation of a more just and equitable world. This is based on the belief that the health of societies exists in direct proportion to the degree of balance between the state, the private sector and civil society.

About Institut du Nouveau Monde

The Institut du Nouveau Monde (INM) is a non-partisan organisation dedicated to stimulating public participation and fresh ideas in Quebec. It seeks to promote social justice and inclusion, in the spirit of respecting democratic values, openness and innovation. Through its activities, the INM proposes a structured and deliberative approach based on the guiding principles of "inform", "debate" and "propose". The INM strives to encourage public participation and contributes to developing citizen skills, strengthening social ties and supporting democratic institutions.

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