



Protecting the human rights of vulnerable groups during the economic and financial crisis - CIVICUS approach

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Presentation Outline

1. What is CIVICUS?
2. Protecting the Rights
3. Development Effectiveness
4. Impact of Financial Crisis on Civil Society
5. Ways Forward



1. What is CIVICUS (1)

- Mission: To strengthen global citizen action and civil society throughout the world
- Promotes 3 E's: Civic Existence, Civic Expression, and Civic Engagement
- Membership-based international alliance with a focus on the global South
- Based in Johannesburg

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1. What is CIVICUS (2)

- Serves a unique function to provide “convening” space for various CSO actors to engage with key institutions from other sectors
- Representative in New York and Geneva to liaise with various United Nations forums

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2. Protecting the Rights (1)

- “Protecting the rights of civil society actors” as one of the Strategic Directions for 2008-2012
- Focus on “civil society space” and monitoring of “restrictive” legislations and legal/political environments
 - Piloting Early Warning System
 - Regional initiative (Eurasia Network)
 - Civil Society Watch Bulletin
- Work with national partners and technical experts

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2. Protecting the Rights (2)

Recent examples

- Zambia NGO Bill - excessive government control
- Turkmenistan - repression of independent civil society groups
 - Western countries are lowering their standards for human rights towards developing countries??

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3. Development Effectiveness (1)

- Multi-stakeholder post-Accra process leading up to the next High Level Forum in 2011
- AAA (Accra Agenda for Action) speaks of
 - Country ownership and developing country systems
 - Inequalities of income
 - Gender equality, respect for human rights, and environmental sustainability are cornerstones for achieving enduring impact on the lives and potential of poor women, men, and children.

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3. Development Effectiveness (2)

CIVICUS is a part of several multi-stakeholder and civil society coalitions:

- Better Aid
- Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness
- UN Development Cooperation Forum
- IATI (International Aid Transparency Initiative)

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3. Development Effectiveness (3)

- From aid effectiveness to development effectiveness
- Conversion of “development” and “rights” approaches
- Accountability and Effectiveness of CSOs
- Question of country “ownership” - how civil society should be involved in crafting and implementing pro-poor policies at the country level

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4. Impact of Financial Crisis on Civil Society (1)

- Comments on the work of the Stiglitz Commission
- UN Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development
 - CIVICUS Secretary General Ingrid Srinath described “shock,” “faint hope,” “disappointment” and “outrage at the concerted attempts to block any efforts at substantive change to return instead as quickly as possible to business as usual.”

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4. Impact of Financial Crisis on Civil Society (2)

- Some coordinated efforts by civil society to work on the confluence of crises
 - Financial, climate, energy, food, etc.
 - Crisis of global governance
- Current 'crisis' provides CSOs with an 'opportunity' for advocacy and collaboration - but need support and multi-stakeholder efforts
- Civil society campaigns as a tool for mobilising public interest (GCAP, GCCA, GCE, etc.)

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5. Ways Forward

- How can we join forces to make concerted action to tackle with this confluence of crisis?
- Need to highlight the "human rights" foundation
- Need to develop a robust link between social security and social protection on the one hand and the development agenda and discourse on financial crisis on the other

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