



## **UN Human Rights Council Passes Resolution on Freedom of Assembly and Association**

The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) and CIVICUS are pleased to announce that on September 30, 2010, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) passed a Resolution on “The Rights of Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association.” An orally revised version of the resolution is attached.

The resolution was co-sponsored by 63 countries and passed by consensus. A cross-regional group, including the Governments of Indonesia, Nigeria, Mexico, Lithuania, the U.S., the Czech Republic, and the Maldives, co-tabled this resolution. ICNL and CIVICUS also actively engaged on the resolution.

The resolution reaffirms that “everyone has the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association,” and that “civil society makes a valuable contribution to the achievement of the aims and principles of the United Nations.” The resolution calls upon States to ensure the rights of individuals to assembly and association by taking all necessary measures to abide by obligations under international human rights law.

The resolution also calls for the appointment of a UN Special Rapporteur to monitor and “study trends, developments and challenges in relation to the exercise of these rights, and to make recommendations on ways and means to ensure the promotion and protection of” these rights. Among other duties, the Special Rapporteur will report on violations and discrimination, threats or use of violence, harassment, persecution, intimidation or reprisals directed at persons exercising these rights.

The initiative benefited from the Community of Democracies Working Group on Enabling and Protecting Civil Society. This Working Group is chaired by the Government of Canada and includes the governments of Sweden, Spain, Mongolia, Sweden, Lithuania, and the U.S. ICNL, CIVICUS, the World Movement for Democracy, UNDP, and others also serve on this working group. While much remains to be done (including the appointment of a respected and committed Special Rapporteur), this is a promising step forward, and we commend the UNHRC for passing this resolution. ICNL and CIVICUS will continue to engage on this issue and other initiatives to defend civic space around the world.