



World Alliance for Citizen Participation

# e-CIVICUS

e-CIVICUS World Assembly Reflection

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

Please send contributions, comments and questions to [editor@civicus.org](mailto:editor@civicus.org).

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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](mailto:editor@civicus.org). All contributions

**FROM THE DESK OF CIVICUS' SECRETARY GENERAL**

Send your comments and contributions to [editor@civicus.org](mailto:editor@civicus.org).



**Our Preferred Future: Lessons from the CIVICUS Civil Society Index**

By Ingrid Srinath, CIVICUS Secretary General

Dear friends and colleagues,

Amidst what some have called 'the perfect storm' – financial meltdown, climate crisis, economic upheaval, mushrooming conflict, widening disparities and stasis in global governance mechanisms – it is all too easy to focus entirely on immediate survival. For civil society the current environment is fraught with threat. Even as resources get scarcer, the demands on many organisations grow rapidly larger. The latest economic crisis is pushing another 53 million people worldwide over the brink into poverty. Economic nationalism rears its ugly head as the domestic priorities of developed countries threaten to erode such political will as existed to meet their commitments to the developing world. Short-term survival needs loom large on the radars of politicians and businesspeople alike. Economic interests dilute concerns about human rights, democratic freedoms and climate justice. Donors consolidate portfolios in reaction to real and anticipated declines in revenues. The actions of even those who most vociferously oppose a 'beggar thy neighbour' approach do not always match their words. *To read this week's column, [click here](#).*



**Civil society calls to release political prisoners, allow humanitarian agencies in Zimbabwe**

Source: Sapa-AP-AFP

The Nobel Peace Prize winner Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu said the Zimbabwean government deal should be given a chance, "but many are not particularly hopeful". He said Mugabe would have to be closely monitored to ensure the coalition does not turn out to be a "charade". Tutu was seated next to Kumi Naidoo, CIVICUS Honorary President and Co-chair of the Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP). Naidoo expressed reservations about the unity government's prospects for success. He called on Mugabe to release political prisoners, allow humanitarian agencies to work freely and repeal restrictions on free speech and assembly. Dr Naidoo also completed his 21-day hunger strike on 11 February, before the Chair of the Commission for Gender Equality in South Africa, Nomboniso Gasa, takes up the challenge to fast for another 21 days. *For details, [click here](#).*

must focus on civil society issues or have a civil society angle. To read 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](http://www.civicus.org).



### Message of hope and sacrifice to Kumi Naidoo and Nomboniso Gasa

By Rabbi Awraham Soetendorp, Founder and President, Jacob Soetendorp Institute for Human Values

My dear Kumi. I watched the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) report about your courageous hunger strike to appeal to the world to act now and help the citizens of Zimbabwe. I am filled with admiration for your leadership through personal sacrifice that breaks the passivity. And I am convinced your example has contributed to the steps that have now been taken. Every time we meet I feel this strong emotional bond. I hope we will have the opportunities to work together. Please consider me as a friend who is near. You know that I always live with the awareness that good people have sacrificed their comfortable life, and even my foster father his life for me. Your standing up against evil and for a compassionate future is a sign of hope for me and for people everywhere who wrestle with their conscience and try everyday to find the courage to act and make a difference. I hope you will now have the time to recuperate and rest. I am proud to know you. I applaud Nomboniso Gasa who has taken up the challenge by fasting for 21 days since Kumi completed his strike on 11 February. *For details, [click here](#).*

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### CIVICUS Poll Question

#### This week's question:

Is civil society properly positioned to play its role in these times of global crises?

- a. Yes, it is beginning to play a positive role
- b. No, it's role is not clearly established
- c. It's only able to play its role In some parts of the world

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

#### Previous question:

Do forums such as the World Economic Forum provide space for views from civil society?

- a. Yes, the voice of civil society is getting heard!
- b. No, not at all
- c. I don't believe in such global forums!

**Results:** a. - 64.2%, b. - 30.2%, c. - 5.7%

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### JOIN e-CIVICUS - BECOME A CONTRIBUTING FRIEND

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.

Do you have friends who work for a more just world? Why don't you suggest they register for a free subscription? They can send an e-mail to [subscriptions@civicus.org](mailto:subscriptions@civicus.org) or fill out the subscription form [here](#). Alternatively, please forward their e-mail addresses to us and we'll contact them on your behalf.

**CIVICUS channel on YouTube:**  
'Time 2 Act' Go to YouTube, [click here](#).



**CIVICUS launches its 1 for 1 membership campaign**

Are you on of the missing 86?

One CIVICUS member for every UN member state, that's the goal of CIVICUS' 1 for 1 Membership campaign, [click here](#).

## CIVICUS blog

Our recently launched blog gives you the opportunity to use your voice and engage with the rest of civil society. Please visit



<http://civibus.civilog.org>.

**Save Zimbabwe Now** initiative has selected a relay fast as the first campaign to mobilise regional public awareness and build pressure on SADC governments to influence the Zimbabwean state to restore dignity, human and democratic rights to its people, [click here](#).

