



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).

20 February 2009

ISSUE No. 426

**PUBLISHER**

CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation

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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

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

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



**State of civil society in Philippines**

By Ingrid Srinath, CIVICUS Secretary General

Dear friends and colleagues,

For this week, CIVICUS' Secretary General, requested CIVICUS' Civil Society Watch programme to focus on the civil society crisis in a country that needed to be highlighted in e-CIVICUS. To read this week' column see details below.

With gratitude, faith and solidarity,

Ingrid Srinath



**Dangerous signals for civil society in Philippines**

By Mandeep S. Tiwana, CIVICUS Civil Society Watch Programme Officer

On 7 February, Wilfredo Gonzales was gunned down by two motorcycle-borne assailants who wore ski masks. He was the head of Habagat Pillar of Batangas Sons of the Seas, an organisation protecting the rights of fisher folk. On 2 February, Leonardo Arceta, a labour movement leader, was picked up at 2 am and taken to the police station. This is not the plot of a B-grade horror film set in a banana republic but an extract of the latest fortnightly report received by CIVICUS from Karapatan, its Philippine partner in the Early Warning System (EWS) project. The EWS project is being piloted in seven countries and seeks to predict and pre-empt threats to civil society. In the last four months, Karapatan has informed CIVICUS about the killings of six civil society members and attempted murders of another two. The Philippines remains one of the most dangerous places in which to be a civil society activist. Since 2001, over 900 extrajudicial killings and 200 enforced disappearances of civil society activists and media persons have been recorded in the country. Karapatan -- which documents abuses committed by state forces, including in their operations against communist and Islamist insurgents -- has had 34 of its staff killed. *For details, [click here](#).*



**Nomboniso Gasa's 21-day fast to Save Zimbabwe Now!**

Source: Save Zimbabwe Now! Campaign

Nomboniso Gasa, the head of the Gender Equity Commission (GCE) in South Africa, embarked on her water only 21-day Hunger-Strike for the Save Zimbabwe Now! Campaign on 11 February. Her first six days of the hunger-strike have passed without incident, but she is currently undergoing emergency medical intervention. A regular doctor's appointment included a battery of

publication in the coming week to [editor@civicus.org](mailto:editor@civicus.org). All contributions 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

blood tests. One test came back with results of alarmingly low iron levels. In hospital she is receiving a seven-hour long intravenous drip to administer iron into her system in a method that does not break the hunger-strike. Gasas will not endanger her health to the point of no return or permanent damage but is committed to this process. Kumi Naidoo, CIVICUS Honorary President completed his 21-day fast on 11 February and is doing well. If the demands of the Save Zimbabwe Now! campaign are not met, Dumisa Ntsebeza, Head of the Investigative Unit within the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and current advocate in the High Court of South Africa, will take the third leg of the relay fast and hunger-strike on 4 March for 21 days. *For details, [click here](#).*

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### CIVICUS Poll Question

#### This week's question:

Civil society crises in smaller countries deserve more global attention

- a. Yes, of course. The world is too obsessed with 'big' international issues
- b. No. The global crises need all the attention they are getting
- c. I care only about what's happening in my part of the world!

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

#### Previous 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

**Results:** a. - 51.8%, b. - 28.2%, c. - 20%

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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.

Why don't you suggest to your friends to register for a free subscription? They can send an email to [subscriptions@civicus.org](mailto:subscriptions@civicus.org) or fill out the subscription form [here](#). Alternatively, please forward their email addresses to us and we'll contact them on your behalf. Please send your contributions by Monday every week to [editor@civicus.org](mailto:editor@civicus.org). All contributions must be focused on civil society issues or have a civil society angle.

**NB:** With this issue we bid farewell to Eric Muragana, who was the managing editor of e-CIVICUS for the last five years. CIVICUS will shortly appoint a Web and New Media Editor to manage the most widely circulated e-newsletter from civil society.

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of current situations. Read more at [www.civicus.org](http://www.civicus.org).

**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://civicus.civiblog.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](#).

## e-CIVICUS DIALOGUES



### **Civil unrest caused by recession 'a major worry'**

Source: [Guardian.co.uk](http://Guardian.co.uk)

The danger of civil unrest caused by the recession is a major worry, the leader of the main charities umbrella organization, said adding that voluntary, community and faith groups had a key role to play in maintaining calm. Stuart Etherington, chief executive of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) and former board member of CIVICUS, predicted that rising joblessness and indebtedness would fuel tensions between races and faiths and could provoke "possibly even public disorder". Speaking to journalists at the NCVO's annual conference in London, Etherington said: "The real art is to find institutions that can create relationships between quite different groups that can defuse potentially difficult circumstances." *For details, [click here](#).*

### **How will Obama engage on human rights?**

By Barbara Crossette, The Nation's United Nations correspondent and former foreign correspondent for the New York Times

A pair of imminent decisions by the Obama administration will reveal how committed it is to engaging the world on universal human rights issues, and whether it is willing to stand up to special interests and a predictable conservative outcry in Washington. On the issue of human rights, bipartisanship will be even harder to achieve than on a domestic economic rescue package. The long term is whether Obama will reverse the Bush administration's boycott of the United Nations Human Rights Council, created in 2006 to replace the discredited Human Rights Commission. Elections for the forty-seven-nation council take place in May, and other candidates are already in the field campaigning for three-year terms. *For details, [click here](#).*



### **A Prayer for the rich and poor in the current global crisis**

By Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane, President and Founder of the African Monitor

The crises that have overtaken the world in the recent past and which continue to rain havoc upon your people reveal how much lies in the realm of what we don't know. Suddenly, it has dawned upon us that so much is hidden from the human mind. But we know that what is hidden from us is not hidden from you. We know also that you reveal secrets to those who seek you and acknowledge their limitations in always finding the correct solutions. And so we pray that you raise leaders that are prepared to right the many wrongs that have beset us for so long, so that good may prevail over evil; equity over selfishness; integrity over hypocrisy; and fair play over greed and recklessness. As the crises intensify, those who have will be tempted to hold on to what they have, become less generous and ignore even more the realities of the weak and vulnerable. So we pray that you do not lead them into that temptation but deliver them from their selfish tendencies and endow them with changed attitudes and new lenses through which to view the world. *For details, [click here](#).*

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## CIVIL SOCIETY NEWS

### **Civil society questions mandate of ASEAN human rights body**

Source: [Asia-Pacific News](#)

The establishment of a human rights body for the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) this year will be of little worth if it has no mandate to conduct independent fact-finding missions in the region, a leading civil rights group warned. 'The body should be able to conduct country visits where there are severe human rights violations and conduct fact-finding missions,' said Yap Swee Seng, executive-director of the human rights group FORUM-Asia. "If the body doesn't have this kind of mandate then the effectiveness of this ASEAN human rights body is questionable," he told a press conference in Bangkok. *For details, [click here](#).*



### **Counterterrorism practices threaten global human rights**

Source: Devin Montgomery, JURIST archive

Counterterrorism policies adopted by countries around the world since 2001 pose a "serious threat to the integrity of the international human rights legal framework", according to a report issued by a special panel of human rights experts convened by the International Commission of Jurists. The panel, Eminent Jurists Panel on Terrorism, Counter-Terrorism and Human Rights, said that the policies have resulted in torture, abductions, arbitrary and secret detentions, unfair trials, and other limitations on human rights, and that many such policies, originally designed to be temporary, have effectively become permanent. The panel concluded that legal frameworks that existed before 2001 were sufficient to address the risks posed by terrorism, and that any future attempts at combating the threat should be long-term and should not discount fundamental rights. *For details, [click here](#).*

### **Militia robbed: European Belarus activists in connection with "theft"**

Source: Charter 97

Police have arrested and detained five activists from the European Belarus campaign, and confiscated office equipment, including two computers, from one of the activists' apartments. Although the police claimed their investigation was on account of suspected theft, the questioning of the detainees centered around their possession of 'anti-state' materials. The European Belarus is a campaign organized by young activists to propagate democracy and European values in the country. *For details, [click here](#).*

### **Indian civil society unites in the fight against aids**

Source: Media For Freedom, [mediaforfreedom.com](http://mediaforfreedom.com)

A number of Indian civil society actors gathered together in Mumbai from 12 to 13 February, to explore possibilities in creating common space for joint actions towards developing a multisectoral HIV response in India. Representatives from Mumbai, Delhi, Karnataka, Orissa, Bangalore, Pune, Bihar, Patna, Kohlapur, Nagpur, Chennai, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Chatisgarh and Manipur participated in the people's conference. Most of these represented networks and organisations of their respective states. *For details, [click here](#).*

### **Media manipulation and political control in Russia**

By Maria Lipman, Chatham House

Chatham House recently published a report on the control of the media in Russia since the breakup of the Soviet Union. It provides an overview of the changes: from the pluralistic and diverse media in the early 1990s, to a return to the glasnost reminiscent political environment of today. The paper continues on with a discussion of the current economic crisis, and the opportunities are presents for social activism and political pluralism, creating space for an independent media. Lipman warns, however, that economic recession could also lead to further repressions and political control. *For details, [click here](#).*

### **Showdown between civil society and government expected in Zimbabwe**

Source: The Zimbabwe Standard

A major showdown is looming between civil society and the new inclusive government over the proposed constitution-making process, described by pro-democracy groups as undemocratic. According to the 15 September power-sharing agreement between Zanu PF and the two MDC formations, which was consummated with the swearing in of the Prime Minister, his two deputies and cabinet ministers last week, the new government would be required to draft a new constitution within two months. Article six of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) stipulates that a select committee of parliament will come up with a draft constitution subject to debate by the House. The select committee has the prerogative to decide which representatives of civil society would be involved in the writing of the constitution and can change any provisions contained in the draft. *For details, [click here](#).*

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## **GLOBAL CALL TO ACTION AGAINST POVERTY (GCAP) AND UN MILLENNIUM CAMPAIGN (UNMC)**

### **Ireland cuts aid due to financial crisis - civil society reacts**

Source: Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP)

At a time when World Bank research is showing that more people are being pushed into poverty in developing countries due to the global financial crisis, several developed countries are cutting their overseas aid budgets drastically. In Ireland, the NGO platform Dóchas, has come out strongly against its government's decision to slash aid. In Ireland the GCAP coalition, led by the NGO platform Dóchas, has come out strongly against its government's decision to slash aid. "We acknowledge that the Government faces difficult choices but are dismayed at the size of this cut, the third significant chop to the aid budget in just seven months," said Dochas, the Irish platform of development NGOs. *For details, [click here](#).*

### **International Women's Day 2009 - GCAP to link gender equality with G20**

Source: Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP)

GCAP's first major coordinated action of 2009 will take place around International Women's Day on 8 March with the launch of an online campaign called '20 Days of Action' aimed at mobilising people to connect gender equality with the G20 happening weeks later in London. By highlighting the interlinkages between women and poverty and the global crises (food, fuel and financial), GCAP aims to ensure that there is both urgent action taken in London when leader's meet and the discussion that includes women happens in future through a more representative forum (the UN) and not the limited summits of the 8 or 20 leaders. *For details, [click here](#).*

### **GCAP Italy launches actions at G7 Finance Ministers meeting**

Source: Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP)

On occasion of the G7 Finance Ministers' and Governors' Meeting, hosted in Rome on 13 and 14 February, GCAP Italy prepared a letter to G7 Finance Ministers. It was distributed through GCAP platforms, offering an advocacy tool to everybody and more of these actions or tools will be shared in the next months. In Italy, the letter was sent to Finance Minister Tremonti and presented to the media in a Press Conference held on 14 February. During the press conference, the GCAP Italy speakers, Laura Ciacci and Sergio Marelli, presented the Italian Coalition against Poverty (GCAP Italy) and its advocacy and policy work to assembled journalists, GCAP Italy's policy paper for the G8 2009 as well as the GCAP Italy and Desmond Tutu unresponded letters sent to Minister Tremonti. *For details, [click here](#).*

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## **MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGs)**

### **No Matter the crisis, the world cannot afford cuts in health expenditure**

Source: Standard Newswire -- Submitted by Dr Manoj Kurian

How economies will fare after the current financial seism has passed will depend very much on how governments and civil society are able to care for the welfare and health of their people during the crisis. An ongoing concern for the World Health Organisation (WHO) -- the issue of how the financial crisis impacts health expenditure across the world -- also interests civil society and faith-based organisations. Many of the key campaigns to combat disease and to keep global public health objectives on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goals are heavily dependent on international cooperation and support. Cutting back on funding would jeopardise ongoing treatment of millions of people affected by diseases such as HIV and tuberculosis. This would not only infringe fundamental rights of these individuals, but it would also have potentially disastrous consequences for public health. *For details, [click here](#).*

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## GET INVOLVED!



### **Must Watch: Sixth training workshop for CIVICUS' CSI programme**

The CIVICUS Civil Society Index ( CSI ) programme conducted its sixth training workshop in this new phase of implementation, during 10-12 February, with partners from the Asia Pacific region. The partners were brought together in Johannesburg , South Africa , to learn about the new CSI methodology and how to use this methodology to assess the state of civil society in their countries. They also learned how the methodology will allow the civil society sector in their countries to develop concrete and informed action plans to strengthen their work and influence in their national contexts. Some video clips from the workshop are now up on the YouTube channel of CIVICUS. To watch the video, [click here](#).

### **Appeal to join All People's India Manifesto**

Source: Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP) in India

The All India People's Manifesto is a blueprint for the future of India -- made by the people of India . It is a statement of national objectives based on the ground realities and aspirations of people living across the country, and an assertion that in the world's largest democracy, it is not merely votes but also voices that need to be heard. Wada Na Todo ( GCAP in India ) have been organising a massive country-wide consultation to gather the voices of the people into an All India People's Manifesto. Local groups and national networks are joining hands to develop the All India People's Manifesto in 300+ parliamentary constituencies, making it the most extensive effort to establish a grassroots driven, people's development agenda in recent times. At the half-way mark through the consultation, Wada Na Todo will be presenting the emerging 'national agenda' at an event in New Delhi on 24 April. *For details, [click here](#).*

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## ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

### **CIVICUS partner for transparency and accountability - Open Society Institute**

The Open Society Institute is a partner of CIVICUS Civil Society Index programme founded in 1990 with the support of George Soros as a non-governmental organisation for public benefit. The Open Society Institute -- Sofia works for transparency and accountability in policy-making. It promotes effective capacity building in the civil sector and provides technical assistance and project management analysis and expertise. It also pursues the strengthening of the rule of law and the inclusion of the Roma minority in the country, Bulgaria . *For details, [click here](#).*

### **Have your say in the next edition of AA1000SES**

Source: Tania Gobena, Communications Advisor, AccountAbility

The AA1000 SES revision survey kicked off last month with the aim of making the standard more relevant and accessible across entire organisations, including those in the public sector. Is this what is needed? How much practical detail should the standard go into and what should it address? To participate and have a say on the direction of the new standard, [click here](#).

### **Corruption and Human Rights: Making the Connection**

By Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona, Research Director, International Council on Human Rights Policy (ICHRP)

Corruption is being addressed by financial institutions, government agencies, bilateral donors, international organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and development professionals



Countries have negotiated and signed international anti-corruption conventions. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Global Programme against Corruption has acted as a catalyst, helping countries to implement the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). Transparency International (TI) and other civil society actors have created a large forum for discussion and advocacy around its many forms; an international coalition of NGOs has emerged, challenging corruption. *For details, [click here](#).*

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## CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIVISM ON GLOBAL INSTITUTIONS



### **Global labour chief says civil society should be heard in crisis**

Source: Ecumenical News International

The global financial crisis is likely to increase social conflict, says the head of the International Labour Office, Juan Somavia, asserting that civil society organizations have an important role in helping those affected to be heard. "We must expect there's going to be more social tension," Somavia, the ILO's director general, told journalists on 18 February ahead of the first World Day of Social Justice. The day, 20 February, was proclaimed by the U.N. general assembly in November. He warned that the effects of the crisis would be felt most heavily by the poorest people in society, not only those in developing countries but also sectors of developed countries. *For details, [click here](#).*

### **Declaration to fight anti-Semitism signed in London**

By Jonny Paul, Jerusalem Post Correspondent

A declaration pledging to challenge anti-Semitism was signed on behalf of all participating nations, the final day of the London Conference on Combating Anti-Semitism. Noting the dramatic increase in anti-Semitism being disseminated in the media and attacks targeting Jewish persons and property, the London Declaration was signed by 125 parliamentarians from 40 countries. It called on national governments, parliaments, international institutions, political and civic leaders and civil society to "affirm democratic and human values, build societies based on respect and citizenship and combat any manifestations of anti-Semitism and discrimination". *For details, [click here](#).*

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## CLIMATE JUSTICE

### **Hillary Clinton engaging civil society to forge a Climate Treaty with China?**

By Alex Pasternack, Observer of environment, architecture and society

As Secretary of State Clinton heads to China with the beginning of a climate agenda in tow, many are wondering how the world's biggest environmental stalemate can become its biggest opportunity. A promising but complicating aspect to the approach Clinton hopes to take is her interest in bypassing ministries and "engag[ing] civil society" directly "to strengthen the foundations needed to support good governance, free elections, and a free press, wider educational opportunities, stronger healthcare systems, religious tolerance, and human rights." *For details, [click here](#).*

### **Report: Realizing a "Global Green New Deal"**

Source: UN Environment Programme (UNEP)

The report, *A Global Green New Deal*, commissioned on behalf of UNEP's Green Economy Initiative was written by Professor Edward B Barbier of the University of Wyoming. One third of the around \$2.5 trillion-worth of planned stimulus packages should be invested on 'greening' the world economy. This would assist in powering the global economy out of recession and onto a Green, 21st century path a new report released today by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) says. The estimated

\$750 billion of green investment, equal to about one per cent of current global GDP , could trigger significant, multiple and potentially transformational returns. *For details, [click here](#).*

### **Poznan and beyond - Concern over Bank's climate funding**

Source: Bretton Woods Project

The UN conference on climate change took place in Poznan at the beginning of December, drawing 11,000 delegates, including 1,500 corporate lobbyists, to discuss the way forward on global climate negotiations. A final deal is to be made in December 2009 in Copenhagen . This highlights the division between the G77 and China bloc (representing 133 developing countries) which support a new, democratically governed mechanism for climate change financing through the UN as opposed to the G8 countries which, have supported channelling of investment through the World Bank. Reflecting these concerns and others expressed by the G77, a coalition of 160 civil society organizations issued a joint statement calling for development of a Global Climate Fund under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). *For details, [click here](#).*

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## **PROFILES**



### **DONOR: Disability Rights Fund (DRF)**

DRF seeks to strengthen the participation of Disabled Persons' Organisations (DPOs) in the advancement of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) at country level in the Global South and Eastern Europe/former Soviet Union . The 2009 "Raising Our Voice" grant cycle will consist of two grant making rounds: The first grant making round is directed to DPO activities in the following three countries: in Latin America -- Mexico; in Asia: India; and in Eastern Europe/fSU - Ukraine. The deadline for applications for this round is Thursday, 16 April 2009 at 24:00 (GMT). The second grant making round will be publicised in July 2009 and will encompass grants to the same seven target countries which were DRF grant making occurred in 2008. In Africa : Ghana , Namibia , and Uganda . In Latin America : Ecuador , Nicaragua , and Peru . In Asia : Bangladesh . *For details, [click here](#).*

### **MEMBER: Civic Alliance-Latvia (CAL)**

CAL is an umbrella NGO headquartered in Riga , Latvia , which unites 92 non-governmental organizations and private members. The goal of the association is to improve legal and financial environment for the non-governmental sector in Latvia and to strengthen capacity of the NGOs for efficient public advocacy performance. CAL advocates interests of the NGO sector in Latvia, identifies and tries to resolve problems in the non-governmental sector, supports and fosters the participation incentives on NGOs in the decision making process and represents the interests of NGOs in communication with public authorities. CAL provides information about EU issues, legislation, funding, education, motivation and engagement, it offers legal and book-keeping advice and carries out research initiatives important to the sector. *For details, [click here](#).*



### **PARTNER: Third Sector Foundation of Turkey (TUSEV)**

TUSEV, a CIVICUS Civil Society Index partner, was established in 1993 by Turkey's leading civil society organisations (CSO), and has now grown to a supporting network of over 100 associations and foundations that share a vision of strengthening the legal, fiscal and operational infrastructure of the third (non-profit) sector in Turkey. Among TUSEV's main objectives are civil society law reform, research on civil society and philanthropy, promoting social investment and social justice philanthropy, and facilitating partnerships across sectors, as well as across borders. Since its establishment, TUSEV has been a leader in producing literature and policy for the sector's needs and future, and has played a crucial role in recent reforms concerning civil society laws. In 2008, the Foundation and its trustees hosted the 19<sup>th</sup> EFC Annual General Assembly and Conference in Istanbul , which marked the largest international gathering of foundations in the history of Turkey . *For details, [click here](#).*



[Read more on the previous member profiles...](#)

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## BOOKS, REPORTS & RESOURCES

### **CIVICUS AGNA Resource Guide on establishing and sustaining a national association**

By David E. Kode, CIVICUS AGNA Support Officer

The development of national associations is proof of the growth experienced in the civil society sector and this has prompted NGOs at local and regional levels to engage with each other thereby enhancing citizen participation. The Affinity Group of National Associations (AGNA) was in this respect created to provide an avenue for national and regional associations to come together, share experiences and learn from each other. In this light AGNA developed a resource guide with the aim of providing guidelines for the creation of national associations in areas where they do not exist and to improve on the work of those that are already in existence. The resource guide was prepared using responses from AGNA members and highlights the functions national associations play in countries and regions, their relations with government and other sectors and more especially the role they play in strengthening civil society. *For details, [click here](#).*

### **Report: Public Workers' Rights still denied in Japan**

Source: International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)

Violations of trade union rights and discrimination remain to be addressed in Japan, according to an ITUC report on core labour standards. The report, which coincides with the Trade Policy Review of Japan at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) on 18 and 20 February, notes that many workers continue to be restricted in their right to organize, particularly public sector employees and civil servants. Restrictions also exist with regard to their right to collective bargaining, and public sector workers do not have the right to strike, whereas private sector workers employed in so-called essential services have to give a ten-day advance notice. *For details, [click here](#).*

### **The poverty-health link study**

A new study - by the Community Social Planning Council, University of Toronto and the Wellesley Institute

The study has drawn a direct link between poverty and ill health. Ontarians on welfare suffer from diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, mood disorders and other chronic ailments at up to four times the rate of middle- or upper-income earners. Such findings are always disturbing, but given the current economic downturn, there's even greater cause for concern over this study. Given the inadequacy of Canada's Employment Insurance program -- only 3 in 10 out-of-work Ontarians qualify for it -- welfare may be the only help for many thrown out of work by the downturn. And this study clearly shows that living on the meagre amount provided by welfare programs severely compromises one's health. *For details, [click here](#).*

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## CONFERENCES & EVENTS

### **53rd Commission on the Status of Women**

2 to 13 March 2009, UN headquarters in New York, USA

NGOs that are accredited to, and in good standing with, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), are invited to designate representatives to attend the annual sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women. Non-governmental, non-profit, public or voluntary organizations may formally contribute to the work of the UN after being granted consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) under Article 71 of the Charter of the United Nations.

meetings of ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies, including the functional commissions, in accordance with the rules of procedure of those bodies. *For details, [click here](#).*

### **Corporate Accountability: Workshop on Campaigning Tools & Strategies**

13-14 March 2009, Bangalore

The Cividep and Corporate Accountability Desk invite applications for a two-day resource sharing workshop in Bangalore on various alternative tools and campaign strategies for corporate accountability. The workshop will mainly focus on international instruments such as UN initiatives on business and human rights, inter-governmental guidelines for corporate conduct, voluntary codes and transnational litigation as advocacy tools and how effectively these could be used by civil society organisations. *For details, [click here](#).*

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## **WORKSHOPS AND COURSES**

### **Advanced Study of Nonviolent Conflict**

21-26 June 2009, Tufts University, Medford, Massachusetts, USA

Members of local and international NGOs, journalists, human rights lawyers, staff members of international institutions/think tanks/research groups & policy analysts/advisors are invited to participate in the Fletcher Summer Institute education programme to examine how this form of struggle works, the strategies that make it effective, and the skills involved in its execution. Around the world, in places as diverse as Egypt, Vietnam, Burma and Western Sahara, nonviolent movements and campaigns are enabling people to resist oppression and injustice without the use or threat of violence. Applications deadline is 13 March. *For details, [click here](#).*

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## **CALL FOR PAPERS, SUBMISSIONS, SURVEYS & NOMINATIONS**

### **Call for Proposals: CIVICUS Nelson Mandela Graca Machel Innovation Awards**

Proposal Deadline: 3 April 2009

CIVICUS invites applications for the Nelson Mandela Graca Machel Innovation Awards from those organisations who attended the CIVICUS World Assembly in Glasgow in June 2008. These awards are aimed at providing seed funding for innovative ideas emerging from organisations or groups of participants at the CIVICUS World Assembly. The broad idea is to support community based and grassroots initiatives with an emphasis on the overall WA theme: Acting Together for a Just World. The call for proposals is available in [English](#), [French](#) and [Spanish](#).

[Read more...](#)

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## **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.

## **JOBS OF THE WEEK**

### **Secretary General**

Application Deadline: 23 February 2009

European Movement International  
Location: Brussels, Belgium  
*For details, [click here](#).*

**Programme Manager**

Application Deadline: 2 March 2009  
Christian Aid  
Location: New Delhi  
*For details, [click here](#).*

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**CONTACT e-CIVICUS**

e-CIVICUS is a free weekly online publication keeping tens of thousands of people, organisations and programmes informed of the many developments and factors that affect civil society and their impact on creating a more just world.

We value your comments and suggestions. Please send these to the Editorial Team at [editor@civicus.org](mailto:editor@civicus.org).

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