

Global Agenda Council on the Role of Civil Society 2012-2014



Understanding/Context

A duality currently defines civil society. On the one hand, civil society is more vibrant and dynamic than ever, with social movements emerging in different parts of the world and in spontaneous, online forums on issues ranging from civic participation and women's rights to corruption. Politicians and private-sector leaders are recognizing civil society as an essential ingredient in an effective, stable democracy and as a vital contributor to innovative development solutions.

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On the other hand, the enabling environment of civil society is coming under increasing threat worldwide from various restrictive conditions, including legal measures, funding cuts and barriers to assembly, as noted in the 2013 State of Civil Society report from CIVICUS, a global alliance for citizen participation.

Shaping the Agenda

The Council has been focusing on the challenge of how civil society can participate more effectually in setting global agendas on, and finding solutions to, societal problems. It also seeks to demonstrate why civil society is essential in all its diversity, not only the formalized elements.

The Council aims to draw conclusions that will foster new thinking in other contexts and in global decision-making processes by sharing knowledge and lessons learned based on specific examples of innovative relationships. The Council is interested in exploring the changing roles of civil society, business and government through the lens of specific issues, and in starting a dialogue with the private and public sectors on practical models of engagement and action on societal problems.

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